United Nations A/68/157

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 July 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 22 (b) of the preliminary list*
Groups of countries in special situations: comprehensive ten-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action

Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/222, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and on the progress made in the preparatory process for the comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

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13-39753 (E) 090813

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I. Introduction

1. The Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries was adopted in 2003 as the United Nations response to the growing need to address the special development challenges faced by the 31 landlocked developing countries. The present report provides an update on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, focusing on the key priority areas and on the status of the preparatory process for the comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held in 2014. The report concludes with policy recommendations and has a statistical annex.

II. Overview of development challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and recent developments in economic and social conditions

2. Their lack of direct territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from major international markets make the landlocked developing countries highly dependent on transit countries for their seaborne trade. They also face additional border crossings, cumbersome transit procedures, inefficient logistics systems, weak institutions and poor infrastructure, all of which substantially increase the total costs of transport services and other trade transaction costs. These high costs create a tremendous trade-reducing effect that has a direct negative impact on the countries' economic growth and, consequently, on their capacity to promote social development and environmental sustainability.

3. Landlockedness hinders full participation in international trade and minimizes comparative advantage. In a recent study, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States used econometric methods to empirically estimate the total development cost, including the economic and social dimensions, of being landlocked. The study revealed that, because of landlockedness, the level of development in the landlocked developing countries was, on average, 20 per cent lower than what it would be if the countries were not landlocked. In 2010, the trade volume of the landlocked developing countries was just 61 per cent of the trade volume of coastal countries, while the transport costs of the landlocked developing countries were 45 per cent higher than those of a representative coastal economy. In its publication *Doing Business 2013: Smarter Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises*, the World Bank estimated that the basic import and export costs of the landlocked developing countries were nearly twice those of their transit neighbours. The landlocked developing countries spent, on average, $3,040 to export a standardized container of cargo, whereas transit countries spent $1,268. Likewise, it cost the landlocked developing countries $3,643 to import a similar container of merchandise and their coastal neighbours only $1,567 (see table 2).

4. The geographical problems facing the landlocked developing countries are further exacerbated by emerging challenges, including external shocks. When the great recession bottomed out in 2009, it left the gross domestic product growth rate for the landlocked developing countries at 3.6 per cent, substantially below the

decade-long average of 6.1 per cent. In 2010, output rebounded strongly to 6.7 per cent, only to decelerate once again to 6 per cent in 2011. The slowdown in economic output was expected to persist, with the rate of growth for 2012 projected at 4.9 per cent. While real gross domestic product per capita increased slightly from $1,347 in 2010 to an estimated $1,464 in 2012, the pace of growth decelerated for the third consecutive year. Nearly two thirds of the landlocked developing countries have a gross domestic product per capita that is below $1,000.

5. The slowdown of the gross domestic product growth rate in 2012 reflects the contagion effects associated with the persistent sovereign debt crisis in the euro zone, the double recession in major economies and anaemic global demand for commodities, especially in the United States of America, Japan and Europe. Emerging challenges, coupled with a deterioration of the current crises, including delays in resolving the core problems, are likely to lead to a worsening of the balance sheets of Governments and commercial banks, including those in the landlocked developing countries. While the gross domestic product of the landlocked developing countries is forecast to continue expanding, it is unlikely to reach the pre-crisis pace set in 2008 in the near future.

6. Total value addition from agriculture, manufacturing and exports of goods and services continues to diminish. In the case of agriculture, for example, value addition is estimated to have declined from 22.8 per cent in 2001 to 18.2 per cent in 2011. Measured as a percentage of the annual gross domestic product of the landlocked developing countries, the manufacturing value added — a basic indicator of the level of industrialization — has declined by 36 per cent, from a peak of 18.1 per cent in 1992 to 11.5 per cent in 2011. Indicative of the geographical disadvantage, that manufacturing collapse was worse for the landlocked developing countries than for a comparable group of transit developing countries, which sustained only a 7.5 per cent contraction over the same period. Besides slowing down economic diversification, deindustrialization undermines productive capacity and reverses structural transformation, isolating the landlocked developing countries further. It also prevents their effective and meaningful participation in global value chains and international trade.

7. Headline inflation for the group continues to manifest wild swings. After climbing rapidly from 5.9 per cent in 2010 to 10.0 per cent in 2011, it moderated to an estimated average of 7.3 per cent in 2012. It remains, however, in the double-digit range for six countries: Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mongolia, Uganda and Uzbekistan. The root causes include increased food prices caused by poor grain harvests, rising utility prices and spillover effects of expansionary fiscal policies in other countries.

8. Although the landlocked developing countries are making some progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, there is growing evidence that the group will not achieve many of the Goals by 2015. Successful interventions include those to promote the survival rates of children in landlocked developing countries. The group-wide mortality rate for children under 5 years of age has significantly declined, falling from a high of 121.5 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 80.9 per 1,000 live births in 2011. Formidable challenges persist, however, because 15 countries continue to have mortality rates in excess of 150 per 1,000 live births.

9. Women's empowerment, as approximated by the share of women in parliaments, has increased, rising from 8.4 per cent in 2000 to 20.2 per cent in 2012. Progress in narrowing the gender gap in education has been modest, with the ratio of women to men with at least secondary education improving from 0.6 in 1990 to 0.7 in 2010. There has, however, been limited success in improving the ratio of female to male labour force participation. For countries with data, that ratio is estimated to have stagnated at 0.8 since 2000.

10. While building on the existing Millennium Development Goals, and keeping a strong focus on poverty reduction and human well-being, it is important to ensure that the needs of the landlocked developing countries are securely embedded in the new development agenda. In the context of the post-2015 development discussions, emphasis should be laid on sustainable development capable of creating sufficient decent jobs and on addressing social and human issues, including geographical and gender inequalities. Furthermore, the new development agenda should support structural transformation, build resilience and mitigate the effects of climate change, land degradation, desertification and other natural disasters.

III. Status of implementation of the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action

A. Fundamental transit policy issues

11. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of trade transaction costs is linked to soft infrastructure: border-crossing procedures, policies, laws, transit procedures, logistics and regulatory regimes. For example, in an analytical study covering Europe and Asia, the International Road Transport Union (IRU) demonstrated that, while road shipments were technically feasible and commercially viable, they were seriously constrained by the absence of harmonized procedures and regulations at borders, numerous checkpoints, outdated border-crossing points, inappropriate customs formalities and controls and cumbersome visa processes for drivers. IRU estimated that some 40 per cent of transport time was lost at borders, while unofficial payments accounted for 38 per cent of transport costs in the region.

12. Ratification and effective implementation of relevant international conventions and agreements on transit transport and border crossing by landlocked developing countries and transit countries are necessary for simplifying, harmonizing and standardizing transit operations. Such instruments therefore play a significant role in reducing transit delays and costs. Of the more than 50 United Nations conventions on international transport and trade facilitation, 7 are especially relevant to transit trade and border crossing for landlocked developing countries. The status of accession to these key conventions has been slow, as shown in table 1. Special emphasis should be laid on supporting the landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries to become parties to these important legal instruments.

Table 1
Status of accession to or ratification of selected United Nations conventions by landlocked developing countries and transit countries as at January 2013

Convention	*Number of landlocked developing countries*	*Number of transit countries*
Convention on Road Traffic (1968)	13	12
Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968)	8	9
Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (1975)	11	5
Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)	5	3
Customs Convention on Containers (1972)	6	3
International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)	11	3
Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (1956)	10	2

Source: www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html.

13. A number of subregional transport facilitation agreements relating to transit and landlocked developing countries have recently been developed in Asia to support trade and integration. The negotiation of the annexes to the Agreement between the Governments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Facilitation of International Road Transport was concluded in March 2012. In 2013, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports was adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in its resolution 69/7. African countries are also making progress in elaborating an intergovernmental agreement to underpin the Trans-African Highway, with agreement on the text expected later in 2013.

14. Bilateral agreements remain the predominant tool for road transport transit facilitation, even in areas in which regional integration is high. They are needed to implement local provisions such as common procedures and opening hours of border posts. In a recent study, however, the World Bank reviewed more than 70 bilateral agreements on road freight transport, concluding that over-elaborate bilateral treaties could even be counterproductive because they introduced rigidity in implementation, deviated from international best practices or could be defending vested interests. In such situations, bilateral agreements reduced efficiency and increased the cost of international road transport services. The Bank suggested that States should be supported to adopt a more comprehensive approach when formulating bilateral agreements.

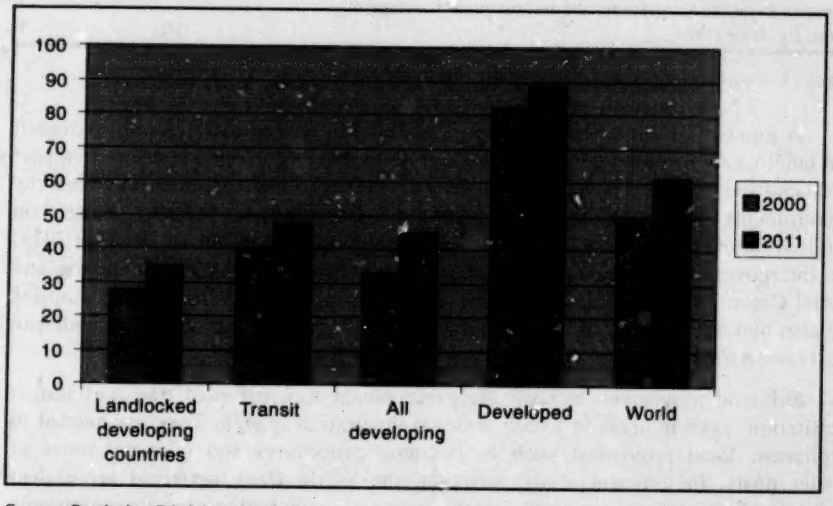
15. Landlocked developing countries and transit countries have increasingly been implementing measures that considerably reduce transaction costs and delays at border-crossing points through the harmonization of customs procedures, rules and documentation. Some of the measures implemented include the introduction of modern electronic applications into the TIR system, the use of the Automated System for Customs Data, one-stop border posts, third-party motor insurance schemes and removal of roadblocks. Many landlocked developing countries have introduced or are planning to introduce single-window systems, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic,

Mongolia, Nepal, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Zambia. Several countries have reported positive economic results from the implementation of such systems.

B. Infrastructure development and maintenance

16. The percentage of paved roads in the landlocked developing countries has improved since 2000 but remains low, with only nine countries having more than 50 per cent and eight countries having between 20 and 49 per cent of their roads paved. When compared with other groups of countries, landlocked developing countries have the lowest percentage of paved roads, followed by transit developing countries, as shown in figure I.

Figure I
Percentage of paved roads



Source:Statistics Division database.

17. In Asia, continued progress has been made in the development and upgrading of both the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway networks. While some 30 per cent of the Asian Highway roads in landlocked developing countries have been improved to a higher standard since 2004, 18 per cent do not meet the minimum standards. The Trans-Asian Railway network covers more than 117,000 km and some progress has been made in improving it by closing some of the missing links. The main challenges, however, remain those of closing the missing links, which constitute 9 per cent of the network, and of harmonizing various infrastructure standards, including railway gauges. According to estimates by the Asian Development Bank, an amount of $290 billion is required each year from 2010 to 2020 to close the transport infrastructure gap in Asia.

18. In Africa, major improvements have been made to the Trans-African Highway, which has nine corridors and a total length of 54,120 km. It is, however, characterized by missing links and poor maintenance in key segments. To provide a

meaningful level of continental connectivity, some 100,000 km of regional roads are required. The African railway network, which is 74,775 km in length and located mostly in north and southern Africa, has extremely low density and various technical standards. New railway development projects, pursued within the framework of the Union of African Railways, which advocates the construction of standard-gauge railways, are under way.

19. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa estimated that some $24.4 billion was needed to finance road and railway transport infrastructure projects that could be implemented under the priority action plan for 2012 to 2020. In 2010, the World Bank estimated that $93 billion per annum was required over the coming 10 years to bridge the infrastructure gap (including transport, energy, water and information and communications technology) in Africa.

20. In South America, the strategic action plan for 2012 to 2022 of the South American Infrastructure and Planning Council has the objective of updating the portfolio of projects for the integration of regional infrastructure in South America. Of an approved portfolio of 531 projects in the fields of transport, energy, and communications with an estimated investment of $116 billion, 159 projects worth $52 billion are under way, another 309 projects worth $53.7 billion are being evaluated and 63 projects have already been carried out. The Council has also indicated a commitment to developing a regional fibre-optic network to improve communications and reduce costs.

21. The development of road and rail networks should be supplemented by the simultaneous development of roadside and railside support infrastructure. Ancillary infrastructure will ensure not only road and rail safety, but also the involvement of local businesses in services along highways and railway networks, thereby resulting in the creation of development corridors. Continued progress is being made in the establishment of dry ports in landlocked developing countries in all regions.

22. With regard to air transport, the use of cargo airfreight has increased in some landlocked developing countries, albeit held back by higher fuel prices. Demand is also limited by cost, given that airfreight is typically priced between 4 and 5 times that of road transport and between 12 and 16 times that of sea transport. In addition, the air transport industry continues to face challenges in most landlocked developing countries because it requires significant resources for infrastructure investment, modernization and maintenance. These challenges limit shipment by air of goods of high value per unit or that are time sensitive in nature, such as documents, pharmaceuticals, fashion garments, electronic consumer goods and perishable agricultural and seafood products.

23. Landlocked developing countries have made remarkable progress in mobile telephony and Internet usage, as shown by an increase of 15 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively, from 2010 to 2011 (see annex, table 6). This recent progress notwithstanding, landlocked developing countries lag behind other developing countries in terms of broadband Internet access, even though this technology can play a crucial role in increasing connectivity, boosting enterprise competitiveness and facilitating international trade. The priorities for improving information and communications technology in the landlocked developing countries include improving access to high-capacity submarine fibre-optic cable networks for low-price international voice services and higher-speed Internet access and laying

high-bandwidth backbone networks to connect towns and cities within countries, across borders and to international submarine fibre-optic cable networks.

24. Reliable, modern and affordable energy infrastructure is vital for reducing delays in transit time for consignments and for building productive capacity in landlocked developing countries. Landlocked developing countries vary widely in terms of rates of electrification. Even though marked improvements in electrification have been seen over the past decade, there remains a long way to go before basic energy infrastructure needs are fulfilled in most such countries. Furthermore, the most recent data show that African countries endured, on average, 8.6 power outages per month in 2012. Such outages are due largely to the lack of regional interconnectivity of electricity grids and electricity shortages in affected countries.

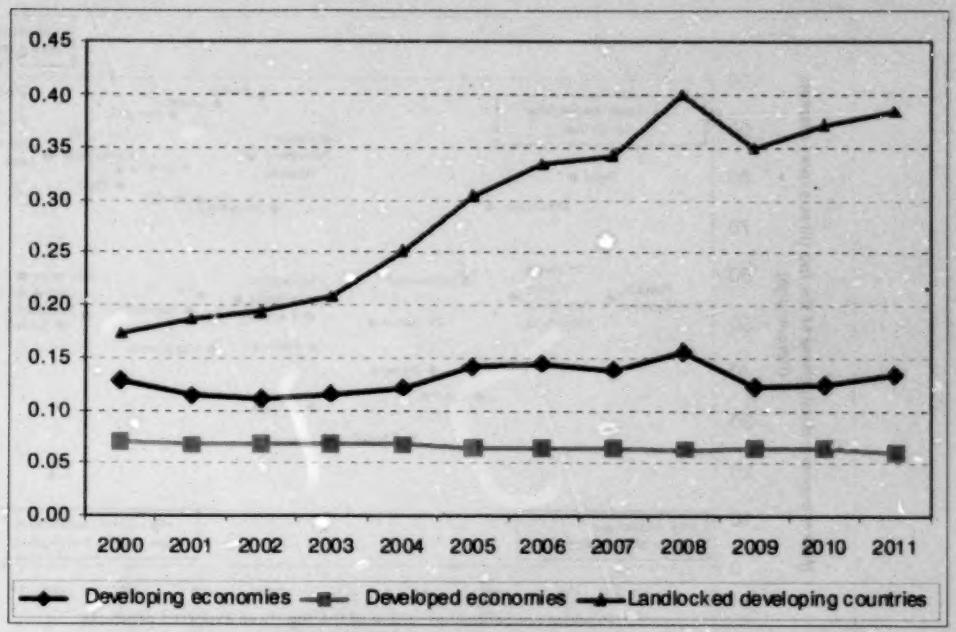
25. The public sector alone cannot close the infrastructure financing gap. Such closure requires forging subregional and regional cooperation on infrastructure projects, strengthening national budgets and international development assistance and enhancing the role of the private sector in infrastructure development. It is also important to explore innovative financing mechanisms, including the use of public-private partnerships, infrastructure bonds and diaspora bonds. Landlocked and transit developing countries should also consider implementing multi-sector infrastructure-sharing initiatives (e.g. in terms of roads, power and communications) so as to reduce financing requirements.

C. International trade and trade facilitation

26. After declining sharply in 2009, merchandise exports from landlocked developing countries grew by 31 and 36 per cent in 2010 and 2011, respectively, rebounding strongly to reach a record high of $224 billion. Exporters of fuel and minerals from landlocked developing countries experienced the largest gains. Growth in exports is, however, estimated to have slowed in 2012. Imports by landlocked developing countries increased by 23 per cent in 2011. Although the terms of trade for landlocked developing countries have generally improved since 2003, seven countries have experienced a deterioration.

27. Landlocked developing countries continued to be marginalized from world trade, although their share in world exports doubled from 2003 to 2011 to reach 1.2 per cent. Nonetheless, more than half of the group's exports originated in just two countries. The export structure of landlocked developing countries continues to be characterized by reliance on a limited number of export products, in particular raw agricultural and mining commodities, as seen in increasing export concentration ratios (see figure II). For example, primary commodities alone constitute more than 80 per cent of exports from 10 African landlocked developing countries. In 2011, just three export products represented more than 70 per cent of exports from 11 landlocked developing countries (see figure III).

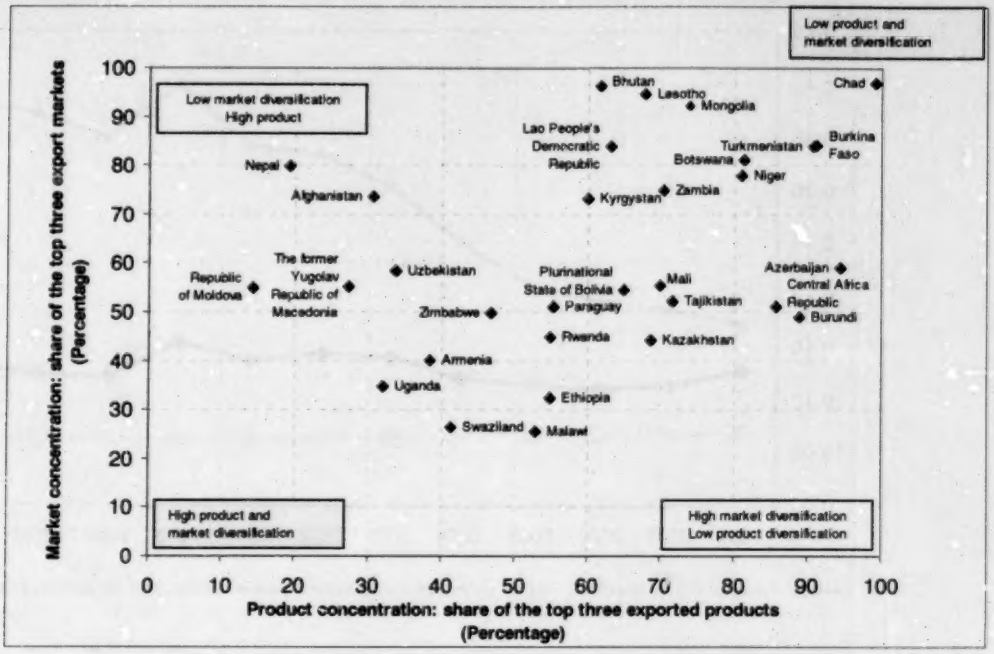
Figure II
Export concentration index of landlocked developing countries and other country groups, 2000-2011



Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) statistical database.

28. In addition to limited export product diversification, landlocked developing countries are also characterized by limited export market diversification, as can be seen in figure III. On average, 62 per cent of exports of landlocked developing countries were destined for just three markets, compared with 48 per cent for transit countries.

Figure III
Product and market diversification of exports of landlocked developing countries, 2011



Source: International Trade Centre trade map.

29. The services sector holds great potential for economic diversification for landlocked developing countries because it is less affected by geographical constraints. The value-added share of the services sector in the gross domestic product of landlocked developing countries has increased, moving from 36 per cent in 1992 to 43 per cent in 2011. Exports of services have been on an upward trend in most landlocked developing countries. Policies aimed at diversifying such countries' exports and economies in favour of low-bulk and value-adding products and services such as tourism, information and communications technology services, finance and banking are critical to reducing the costs of trade and vulnerability to shocks, including commodity price fluctuations. They would also help to link landlocked developing countries to value chains, ultimately providing an important avenue for building productive capacity.

30. With the growing interlinkages in world trade, investment and production, global value chains account for a rising share of international trade. Linking to such chains can facilitate greater integration into world markets and allow landlocked developing countries to become important links in the production and distribution chain. Available evidence indicates that increased participation in global value chains is associated with swifter growth, greater productivity and employment creation and can be a significant avenue for building productive capacity through technology and skills transfer.

31. Major developed countries and more advanced developing countries continue to extend favourable preferential tariff treatment to exports from landlocked developing countries. With the gradual fall in most tariffs, non-tariff measures have become more significant barriers for landlocked developing countries than tariffs. According to surveys conducted by the International Trade Centre, between 60 and 75 per cent of exporters in Burkina Faso, Malawi, Paraguay and Rwanda are affected by non-tariff measures. Enhancing national capacity to reduce the effects of non-tariff barriers should be a priority for landlocked developing countries in order to improve market access and participation in global value chains.

32. Trade facilitation has become the most important trade policy instrument for landlocked developing countries to achieve gains from international trade. Many such countries have made efforts to enhance trade facilitation, yet 8 of the 10 countries in which trading across borders is most difficult are landlocked developing countries. With regard to exporting and importing, landlocked developing countries lag behind their transit partners in terms of transit time and cost (see table 2). While the average transit time for landlocked developing countries decreased from 2006 to 2013, wide variations remain. Further efforts are required to ensure swifter and less expensive trade across borders, including by further harmonizing customs, border and transit procedures and formalities.

Table 2
Ease of trading across borders, 2006 and 2013

	Number of documents required for exports		*Transit time for exports (days)*		*Cost to export (United States dollars per container)*	
	2006	*2013*	*2006*	*2013*	*2006*	*2013*
Average landlocked developing countries	9	8	48	42	2 207	3 040
Average transit countries	8	8	30	23	1 004	1 268

	Number of documents required for imports		*Transit time for imports (days)*		*Cost to import (United States dollars per container)*	
	2006	*2013*	*2006*	*2013*	*2006*	*2013*
Average landlocked developing countries	11	10	57	48	2 688	3 643
Average transit countries	10	8	38	27	1 282	1 567

Source: World Bank "Doing business" database.

33. At the global level, the early conclusion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on trade facilitation that is currently being negotiated could have a major impact on landlocked developing countries. The core mandate of the negotiations is to clarify and improve the following articles of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade: article V, on freedom of transit; article VIII, on fees and formalities connected with importation and exportation; and article X, on publication and administration of trade regulations. The future agreement has the potential to bring specific benefits to landlocked developing countries by way of

easing cumbersome border and customs procedures, lowering transit and transaction costs, increasing predictability and expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods.

34. The most recent draft consolidated text on trade facilitation (TN/TF/W/165/Rev.16, dated 31 May 2013) contains detailed provisions that, once agreed upon, would reinforce the principle of freedom of transit by ensuring that charges, regulations and formalities relating to goods in transit are non-discriminatory and do not constitute disguised restrictions on trade, that any charges applied are reasonable and calculated based on the actual cost of services rendered and that goods in transit are not subject to additional customs duties and technical standards. Furthermore, the agreement would mandate the implementation of certain trade facilitation measures to expedite the release and clearance of goods, such as separate infrastructure for traffic in transit, advance filing and processing of documentation and use of single windows, while prohibiting measures that hinder the flow of goods, such as further controls while in transit and the use of convoys. The agreement would also put in place increased transparency of regulations affecting goods in transit and increased cooperation and coordination.

35. WTO states that a trade facilitation agreement could bring down the global cost of moving trade from roughly 10 per cent of trade value to 5 per cent. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has estimated that trade costs for landlocked developing countries could be reduced by as much as 16.4 per cent. Accordingly, it is important that landlocked developing countries actively participate in WTO trade facilitation negotiations and ensure that their special needs are reflected.

36. In 2013, two landlocked developing countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Tajikistan, became members of WTO. Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan are in the advanced stages of the accession process, while Azerbaijan, Bhutan and Uzbekistan are at various, less-advanced stages of the process. Overall, seven landlocked developing countries are yet to accede to WTO.

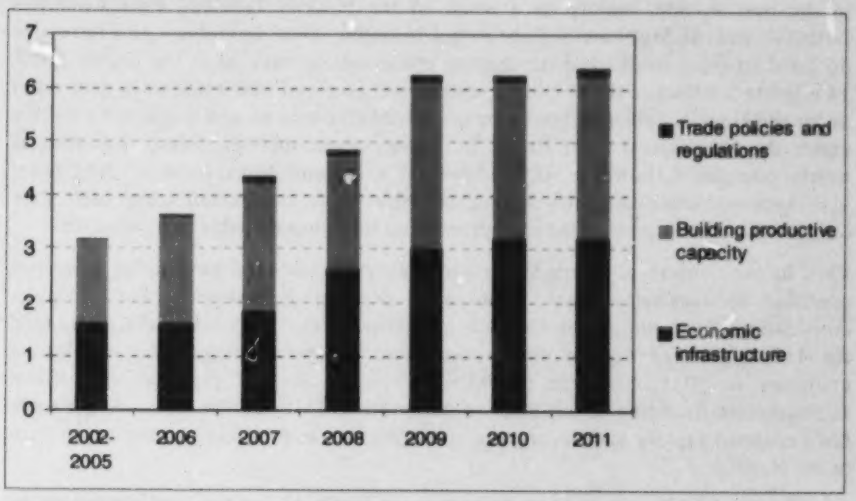
D. International support measures

37. After rising by 60 per cent in real terms from 2003 to 2010, official development assistance flows to landlocked developing countries fell by 3.3 per cent in 2011 to $25.7 billion. This decrease in aid could threaten development expenditure in aid-dependent landlocked developing countries. Official development assistance exceeded 10 per cent of gross national income in 7 landlocked developing countries in 2011, compared with 11 in 2010. Official development assistance receipts are concentrated in a few countries.

38. Aid for Trade to landlocked developing countries reached $6.4 billion in 2011, a 70 per cent real increase since 2005. The inflows largely levelled off in 2010 and increased only marginally in 2011, however. Most flows are directed towards economic infrastructure and building productive capacity (see figure IV). Assistance targeted towards transport and storage has increased, rising from $1.2 billion in 2007 to $2 billion in 2011, and has on average accounted for about one third of total Aid for Trade disbursements. Given the particular infrastructure and trade-related needs of landlocked developing countries, more financial assistance should be

provided to help them to meet the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action and to join value chains.

Figure IV
Aid for Trade disbursements to landlocked developing countries, 2011
(Billions of constant United States dollars)



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development creditor reporting system database.

39. Foreign direct investment inflows to landlocked developing countries reached $34.6 billion in 2012, up from just $8.9 billion in 2003. They accounted for only 5 per cent of total inflows to the developing world in 2012. A handful of resource-rich landlocked developing countries continue to dominate the inflows, with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Turkmenistan accounting for more than two thirds. On the other hand, inflows to 15 African landlocked developing countries represented 19 per cent of foreign direct investment inflows to landlocked developing countries in 2012. A total of 16 landlocked developing countries recorded declines in inflows, 5 of them for the second consecutive year.

40. Although the vast majority of foreign direct investment inflows continue to be in greenfield investments in the extractive industries, some diversification has been observed in manufacturing and services, such as infrastructure development and communications, electricity, gas and water services and business services. It is important that landlocked developing countries and development partners aim to ensure national and international regulatory environments conducive to attracting and diversifying foreign direct investment flows.

41. Remittance flows to landlocked developing countries have grown rapidly, increasing from $2.3 billion in 2001 to $20.5 billion in 2011. They are estimated to have reached $22.2 billion in 2012. They are unevenly distributed across landlocked developing countries, with two countries accounting for almost 40 per cent of the group's total. Remittances represented an equivalent of more than 20 per cent of gross domestic product for 5 landlocked developing countries and exceeded both

official development assistance and foreign direct investment inflows in 10. It is important that increased efforts be made to harness remittances for development-oriented use, such as investment, private-sector development and building of productive capacity, and to reduce transaction costs.

42. The debt burden of landlocked developing countries has declined substantially in the past decade, mainly as a result of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Debt servicing ratios have also declined in most landlocked developing countries. In total, as at the end of 2012, 14 eligible landlocked developing countries had received $20.9 billion in debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and an additional $19.4 billion under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Given that the former initiative is nearly completed, however, it is important to extend some form of debt relief assistance to landlocked developing countries that are experiencing high debt burdens in order to prevent them from entering into unsustainable debt situations.

43. In the context of South-South cooperation, landlocked developing countries continue to receive support from other developing countries. For example, corporations from the global South, in particular from China and India, accounted for 41 per cent of foreign direct investment inflows to landlocked developing countries in 2011. Southern providers accounted for 47 per cent of official infrastructure financing in sub-Saharan Africa from 2001 to 2008. South-South trade has expanded rapidly and developing countries now export more to the South than to the North.

44. The United Nations system and other international and regional organizations and financial institutions continue to provide assistance to landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries and have implemented specific measures.

45. International financial institutions have traditionally been large providers of funds for landlocked developing countries and will continue to play a significant role in the coming years. An important initiative in this context is the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme, which is supported by six multilateral institutions (the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank). It covers 8 of the 12 Asian landlocked developing countries. Under the programme, almost $10 billion has been mobilized by the participating development banks for transport projects in landlocked developing countries since 2004. The institutions have also been active in the four Asian landlocked developing countries that are not part of the programme.

46. The Asian Development Bank is assisting landlocked developing countries by supporting transport and energy infrastructure development and trade facilitation. At the subregional level, it supports transport infrastructure development for corridors and trade facilitation initiatives (customs reforms, customs modernization, joint customs control, establishment of regional associations of freight forwarders, monitoring of corridor performance, improvement of border-crossing points and establishment of single windows) in landlocked developing countries in Asia. In 2011, transport was the Bank's largest sector. It provided $3.5 billion in loans, $55 million in technical assistance and $366 million in grant funding.

47. In Africa, the African Development Bank continues to make significant contributions to the growth of regional infrastructure. Since 2009, it has financed more than 70 multinational operations, including the construction and rehabilitation of cross-border roads and cross-border transmission lines valued at more than $3.8 billion.

48. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Inter-American Development Bank provided $5.4 billion towards infrastructure and natural resource projects over the period 2007-2011.

49. From 2003 to 2013, the World Bank funded at least 10 projects annually that addressed infrastructure development, trade facilitation and logistics. During the financial and economic crises, lending to landlocked developing countries peaked at around $3 billion in 2009. The level of lending has recently decreased, standing at around $1.5 billion in 2012.

50. In 2012, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States continued to advocate and raise awareness of the special needs of landlocked developing countries through various forums. In 2012 and 2013, it collaborated with the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union and the World Bank in helping African countries to further develop and negotiate a draft intergovernmental agreement on the Trans-African Highway. The Office also assisted landlocked developing countries in understanding specific benefits derived from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It continues to support the interim secretariat of the international think tank for the landlocked developing countries, which is located in Ulaanbaatar.

51. In 2012, the United Nations regional commissions and international, regional and subregional organizations assisted Member States in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, through, among others, substantive contributions, capacity-building programmes, advisory services, support for transport infrastructure development and the promotion of legal instruments relating to trade and transport facilitation.

52. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific supported Member States in developing a regional strategic framework for the facilitation of international road transport that was adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport in March 2012. The Commission continues to implement activities to promote the future development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network. It supported the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports, which was adopted in May 2013. Along with the Economic Commission for Europe, it provided capacity-building and training and developed several knowledge products on public-private partnerships, including a guidebook on public-private partnership in infrastructure. It also provided technical assistance to several landlocked developing countries on the preparation and negotiation of trade agreements. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean commissioned a study on logistics costs in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and updated the same for Paraguay. It is preparing a study on transit policies and provision of infrastructure services in both countries.

53. UNCTAD is implementing a technical assistance project on promotion of foreign direct investment in landlocked developing countries in Africa and Asia with

a view to improving their human, institutional and regulatory capacity. In 2012, it assisted seven landlocked developing countries to strengthen their national trade facilitation capacity through the development of national trade facilitation implementation plans. On international trade, UNCTAD provided advisory and capacity-building support to trade negotiators and policymakers from landlocked developing countries; technical assistance to landlocked developing countries acceding to WTO; and demand-based assistance on national services policy reviews to help landlocked developing countries to draw maximum benefits from the services sector.

54. WTO continued to mobilize resources for Aid for Trade in 2012. It is also providing technical assistance in the areas of transport and trade facilitation and capacity-building. Implementation of the outcome of the fourth Global Review on Aid for Trade will help landlocked developing countries to connect better to value chains and reap additional benefits.

55. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization provides technical assistance to landlocked developing countries, focusing on improving infrastructure and industrial capacity and reducing trade costs in order to increase the countries' competitive edge. It provides training to landlocked developing countries in West Africa on improving quality and competitiveness and harmonizing standards. It has supported the development of hydropower and a solar mini grid in some landlocked developing countries. It is cooperating with national stakeholders to improve the business climate and reinforce human capital development through training programmes. It has established a centre for international industrial cooperation in Armenia and will establish a similar centre in Kazakhstan.

56. UNDP has been providing trade capacity-development assistance geared towards accelerating the integration of the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action into relevant areas of work in the 14 landlocked developing countries participating in the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries. It has been providing strategic support and advice for the implementation of Aid for Trade road maps in landlocked developing countries in Europe and Asia. Several follow-up activities have been implemented at the national level, including measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of public administration authorities, establishing export promotion services aimed at farmers and increasing access to affordable finance for small and medium-sized enterprises. UNDP has also provided support to the international think tank for the landlocked developing countries.

57. In 2012, the World Customs Organization continued to provide customs capacity-building services to its members, including landlocked developing countries. It has been contributing to trade facilitation by setting standards and developing tools and instruments and providing technical assistance for their implementation. It launched an economic competitiveness package to support members in increasing economic growth and competitiveness through smooth movement of goods, conveyances and people across borders.

58. The International Trade Centre contributes to building capacity in the area of trade facilitation, in particular on the simplification of cross-border procedures and processes in some landlocked developing countries. In 2012, it provided assistance on WTO accession to three landlocked developing countries and on formulation and implementation of export strategies to nine such countries. It conducted national-

level enterprise surveys focusing on experiences with non-tariff measures as obstacles to trade in five landlocked developing countries. In addition, it is building capacity in selected landlocked developing countries with regard to improved trade information services and market research and analysis, in addition to strengthening trade-support institutions and the productive and export capacity of enterprises.

59. The International Telecommunication Union has been raising awareness of the poor state of telecommunications and encouraging landlocked developing countries to channel resources to their telecommunications sector with a view to ensuring easy access, bridging the digital divide and leveraging the power of information and communications technology and broadband as a driver for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It has mainstreamed the Almaty Programme of Action in its resolutions. For example, in 2012, it adopted a resolution on special measures for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States for access to international optical fibre networks. It conducted workshops to build human and institutional expertise, capabilities and skills to ensure the sustainability of current and future investments in information and communications technology. It has developed several platforms and tools for sharing data, analysis and information on key regulatory issues, in addition to best practices with regard to electronic business, electronic governance, electronic banking, electronic commerce and electronic trading.

60. In 2012, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in collaboration with its partners, undertook capacity-building activities that included training on issues covered by the OSCE-Economic Commission for Europe *Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings*; training on the implementation of an authorized economic operator programme and the use of information and communications technology and non-intrusive inspection methods that benefited landlocked developing countries from Central Asia; and a round table on the role of best practices at border crossings in the implementation of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Control of Goods.

61. IRU has continued to facilitate the development of international road transport through multilateral regional instruments in Europe and Asia. It is supporting the reactivation of the TIR system in Afghanistan and has collaborated in the removal of landmines and explosive remnants of war on or adjacent to roads there. In cooperation with the World Customs Organization, it is promoting training of customs officers on the TIR system in various languages. The IRU Academy continues to focus on landlocked developing countries and, in partnership with six of its regional partners, has launched a project on the design and implementation of a driver training programme. It is promoting the Model Highway Initiative, which aims to create an exemplary section of motorway of up to 2,000 km in length using best practices.

62. The International Chamber of Commerce is assisting in the organization of the private sector track of the preparatory process for the 10-year Review Conference (see para. 78).

IV. Status of preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action

63. To guide and provide strategic direction and vision to the preparatory process for the comprehensive 10-year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has prepared a concept note and a road map outlining preparations at the global, regional and national levels. The Office has also continued its efforts to mobilize and coordinate the active involvement of all stakeholders in the preparatory activities. The preparatory process is being undertaken in three main tracks: the intergovernmental track, the United Nations inter-agency track and the private sector track.

64. In relation to the intergovernmental preparations, landlocked developing countries were invited to prepare national reports on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in order to contribute to the enrichment of the outcome document of the Review Conference. As at 31 May 2013, 13 such countries had submitted reports. UNDP and the Office of the High Representative are making joint efforts to provide the necessary support to the remaining countries in preparing their reports.

65. As decided by the General Assembly, three regional preparatory meetings for the Review Conference are being convened in Africa, Europe and Asia, and Latin America, in close collaboration with the regional commissions, so as to gather crucial input relating to regional perspectives and the needs of the landlocked developing countries. The first regional review meeting, for Europe and Asia, was convened in March 2013. It was hosted by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and organized in cooperation with the Office of the High Representative, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe. It was attended by, among others, representatives of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, other Member States, major stakeholders in the Almaty Programme of Action (including the United Nations system), relevant international and regional organizations, development partners and the private sector.

66. The participants adopted the Vientiane Consensus (see E/ESCAP/69/1, annex). At its sixty-ninth session, in May 2013, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific noted with appreciation the adoption of the Consensus. It presents an assessment of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in the region and provides forward-looking proposals and recommendations for the coming development decade. It also calls for stronger global support measures and the integration of the issues and concerns of landlocked developing countries into the global development framework.

67. At the time of preparation of the present report, the regional review meeting for Africa was to be held from 16 to 18 July 2013. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is finalizing the preparations for the regional review meeting for Latin America, which is to be held later in 2013.

68. The inter-agency track is dealing with the substantive preparations. Three inter-agency consultative group meetings to consult on the United Nations system-wide preparations for the Review Conference have been convened by the Office of the High Representative since February 2012. The group has agreed on a list of

thematic events to be organized before the Review Conference, the outcomes of which will form substantive input to the outcome document.

69. A number of those events have already been held successfully. The first was jointly organized by the Office of the High Representative and the Government of Kazakhstan in Almaty in September 2012. It focused on international trade, trade facilitation and Aid for Trade. At that meeting, held back to back with the Fourth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, participants thoroughly assessed the achievements realized in international trade and trade facilitation. They also deliberated on future actions needed to enhance the participation of landlocked developing countries in the international trading system while further strengthening the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems.

70. In March 2013, the Office of the High Representative organized a brainstorming meeting on the priorities of a new development agenda for the landlocked developing countries. It was attended by representatives of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and donor countries, in addition to experts from United Nations system organizations and representatives of international and regional organizations and the private sector, among others. The participants discussed the key development challenges and needs of the landlocked developing countries, shared ideas, lessons and best practices on how to tackle those challenges and identified the priorities of a new development agenda for those countries.

71. The participants suggested that the new development agenda for the landlocked developing countries must not be designed simply as a sectoral programme but must specifically take on the challenges of such countries more holistically. They further suggested that the development of infrastructure, both soft and hard, would continue to play a catalytic role in improving the connectivity of landlocked developing countries to international markets and their competitiveness. They also emphasized the need for enhanced accession to and effective implementation of relevant conventions and regional agreements, human and institutional capacity-building, increased trade through diversification of markets and export bases, value addition, greater trade in services, links with the global value chains and further market access.

72. The participants stressed that structural transformation of the economies of landlocked developing countries was key to achieving sustainable economic growth and should be included in the new development agenda. Furthermore, they recommended other priorities, such as intensifying regional integration, strengthening international support measures, enhancing the role of the private sector and addressing the vulnerability of landlocked developing countries to external shocks, climate change and desertification. They also underscored the need to strongly reflect the views and concerns of the landlocked developing countries in the discussions relating to the post-2015 development agenda.

73. The Office of the High Representative prepared a study entitled "The development economics of landlockedness: understanding the development costs of being landlocked", which was used as a background document for the meeting.

74. The Office also organized two meetings to inform Member States of the progress made in the preparatory process. On 28 and 29 May 2013, the Global

Services Forum, jointly organized by UNCTAD and the Government of China, was held in Beijing. The special needs of the landlocked developing countries were discussed and included in the outcome of the meeting.

75. On 13 June 2013, jointly with the World Bank, the Office organized an event on transport development and trade facilitation, at which participants reviewed the progress achieved and challenges experienced, making recommendations for the next development agenda of the landlocked developing countries. They noted that, although some progress had been achieved, much more needed to be done. They were deeply concerned that value addition from manufacturing and agriculture in landlocked developing countries had declined over the review period and that export concentration ratios for landlocked developing countries had increased dramatically since 2003. Furthermore, while supportive international legal instruments were available, there was limited effective accession and implementation. On what needed to be done, participants suggested improved transport asset creation and maintenance, deeper regional integration, enhanced operational performance of services, capacity enhancement of public agencies and other stakeholders and enhanced partnerships for financing. They also stressed that many of the original aims of the Almaty Programme of Action remained valid.

76. On 3 July 2013, during the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2013 of the Economic and Social Council, held in Geneva, the Office of the High Representative organized a side event on renewing global partnerships for connecting landlocked developing countries to world markets.

77. Other United Nations and international organizations, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, UNDP, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, WTO, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Common Fund for Commodities and OSCE, have agreed to contribute to the preparatory process by organizing thematic events focused on landlocked developing countries.

78. Preparations under the third track, the private sector, have also begun. The participation and active involvement of the private sector in the preparatory process are essential because that sector is the primary actor in trading activities in landlocked developing countries. The Office of the High Representative will ensure that private-sector representatives are involved in all stages of the preparatory process. The preparation and implementation of private-sector activities for the Review Conference will be overseen and directed by a steering committee that will act as a platform for building consensus among and a common position of the private sector, represent the sector throughout the preparatory process and present the sector's input to the zero draft of the outcome document of the Review Conference during the meetings of the intergovernmental preparatory committee in 2014. The steering committee will consist of members of chambers of commerce and business representatives from landlocked and transit developing countries, the Office of the High Representative, the International Chamber of Commerce and key United Nations system and other organizations. The International Chamber of Commerce is leading the coordination of the committee.

79. The Office of the High Representative has prepared a project document to mobilize resources to support the substantive preparations for the Review Conference and to facilitate the participation of landlocked developing countries. The High Representative continues to reach out to donors to contribute to the trust

fund established by the Secretary-General to facilitate the implementation of and follow-up to the Almaty International Ministerial Conference.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

80. **Lack of access to the sea, the long distance from major international markets, cumbersome transit procedures and inadequate transport infrastructure continue to be the main factors behind the high costs of external trade transactions for landlocked developing countries. The structural vulnerabilities of these countries expose them to the severe negative impacts of the current global economic crisis, food insecurity, climate change, desertification and land degradation. The countries have limited productive capacity and resilience to shocks. Their value addition from manufacturing and agriculture has declined over the review period and their export concentration ratios have increased dramatically.**

81. **During the reporting period, landlocked and transit developing countries continued their efforts to implement the specific actions called for in the Almaty Programme of Action, with the support of donors, the United Nations system and other development partners. Significant gaps remain, however.**

82. **The Review Conference scheduled for 2014 will undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and build a development agenda that can enable landlocked developing countries better to integrate into the global trading system and move closer to achieving the internationally agreed development goals in the coming decade. The Review Conference needs to focus on ambitious and practical outcomes aimed at reducing the costs of trade through the establishment of efficient transit transport systems, stimulating industrialization, strengthening productive capacity, diversifying exports and strengthening resilience to external and internal shocks. The international community should accord particular importance to the process and actively participate in the Review Conference.**

83. **Further efforts are required to reduce the high transport and trade transaction costs for landlocked developing countries by, among other things, deepening regional cooperation and integration. The international community is called upon to assist landlocked and transit developing countries to establish efficient transit transport systems by providing increased financial support to transit transport, ancillary roadside, energy and information and communications technology infrastructure and trade facilitation projects. Initiatives that have proved successful should be replicated and fully funded. Landlocked developing countries and transit countries are encouraged to share best practices in transit policies, including the development of relevant guidelines.**

84. **Landlocked developing countries should ensure the simplification, harmonization and transparency of legal and administrative regulations and requirements associated with transit transport, customs and border management, including by becoming parties to existing relevant international, regional and subregional conventions and agreements and implementing them at the national level. The international community should continue to provide technical, financial and capacity-building assistance to support such efforts.**

85. **Regional integration holds great potential for reducing trade transaction costs for landlocked developing countries and improving their economic development. Landlocked developing countries and their regional and global development partners should therefore strive to enhance connectivity and participation in regional value chains in order to maximize the benefits of globalization.**

86. **Multilateral and regional financial and development institutions are invited to ensure a growing level of investment in trade diversification, infrastructure development and regional connectivity in landlocked developing countries to promote their sustainable development.**

87. **To reduce their vulnerability to external shocks, landlocked developing countries, with the assistance of the international community, should adopt policies aimed at diversifying their production and export base towards new markets, value-adding products and services and should join global and regional value chains.**

88. **Developed countries and advanced developing countries should ensure enhanced and predictable market access for products from landlocked developing countries, along with common, simple, predictable and transparent rules of origin, and consider establishing a preferential market access scheme for exports from landlocked developing countries.**

89. **The international community should provide financial, technological and capacity-building assistance to enable landlocked developing countries to take on the challenges caused by climate change, land degradation and desertification, in particular by putting in place effective adaptation strategies as a priority.**

90. **The Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States are encouraged to further support efforts to develop and conclude an intergovernmental agreement on the Trans-African Highway.**

91. **The international community should strive for an early agreement on trade facilitation in the context of the Doha Round of trade negotiations under WTO. Landlocked developing countries are invited to play a more active role in the negotiations and to ensure that their specific needs are reflected, supported by assistance from development partners.**

92. **Development partners should substantially increase their provision of financial and technical support to landlocked developing countries, including through official development assistance and Aid for Trade, in order to assist such countries to address their supply-side constraints.**

93. **The international community should support and encourage foreign direct investment flows to landlocked developing countries, including through preferential financing programmes, export credits, risk management tools, co-financing, concessional loans, venture capital and other lending instruments and services. Landlocked developing countries should seek to create a stable, predictable and enabling investment environment in order to attract increased and more diversified foreign direct investment.**

94. **Additional financial resources, among others, are needed to ensure the full participation of the landlocked developing countries, least-developed transit countries and the private sector in the preparatory process and the Review Conference itself. Donor countries and international financial and development institutions are invited to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund established to facilitate the implementation of and follow-up to the Almaty International Ministerial Conference.**

95. **The United Nations system and relevant international organizations should provide the necessary support for and actively contribute to the preparatory process and the Review Conference itself, especially through pre-conference and parallel events on topics of great relevance to the landlocked developing countries. There is also a need to step up public information efforts and other appropriate initiatives in order to enhance awareness of the Review Conference.**

Annex

Statistical tables

Table 1
Gross domestic product and rate of growth

	Constant 2005 prices (millions of United States dollars)			*Per capita (constant 2005 United States dollars)*	*Gross domestic product*		
					Average annual rate of growth (percentage)		
Landlocked developing countries	*2003*	*2010*	*2011*	*2011*	*2003*	*2010*	*2011*
Afghanistan	5 887	10 393	10 989	340	8.2	3.2	5.7
Armenia	3 896	5 922	6 200	2 000	14.0	2.2	4.7
Azerbaijan	9 510	28 305	28 331	3 044	11.2	5.0	0.1
Bhutan	722	1 288	1 364	1 847	7.6	11.8	5.9
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	8 778	11 954	12 572	1 246	2.7	4.1	5.2
Botswana	9 513	11 848	12 526	6 168	6.3	7.0	5.7
Burkina Faso	4 812	7 105	7 466	440	7.8	7.9	5.1
Burundi	1 060	1 530	1 595	186	(1.2)	3.9	4.2
Central African Republic	1 283	1 554	1 605	358	(7.1)	3.0	3.3
Chad	4 072	7 053	7 307	634	14.3	14.6	3.6
Ethiopia	9 674	20 590	22 892	270	(2.2)	12.6	11.2
Kazakhstan	47 518	76 978	82 751	5 106	9.3	7.3	7.5
Kyrgyzstan	2 303	3 056	3 230	599	7.0	(0.5)	5.7
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2 378	3 988	4 309	685	6.2	8.1	8.0
Lesotho	1 302	1 711	1 783	813	4.7	5.6	4.2
Malawi	2 303	3 980	4 161	271	(3.8)	6.7	4.5
Mali	5 055	6 989	7 176	453	7.6	5.8	2.7
Mongolia	2 127	3 454	4 050	1 446	7.0	6.4	17.3
Nepal	7 650	10 299	10 699	351	3.9	4.8	3.9
Niger	3 162	4 328	4 427	275	3.4	8.2	2.3
Paraguay	6 977	9 746	10 116	1 540	3.8	15.0	3.8
Republic of Moldova	2 589	3 502	3 726	1 051	6.6	7.1	6.4
Rwanda	2 199	3 835	4 164	381	2.1	7.2	8.6
Swaziland	2 451	2 917	2 955	2 456	2.2	1.9	1.3

Landlocked developing countries	Constant 2005 prices (millions of United States dollars) 2003	2010	2011	Per capita (constant 2005 United States dollars) 2011	Gross domestic product: Average annual rate of growth (percentage) 2003	2010	2011
Tajikistan	1 965	3 167	3 401	487	11.1	6.5	7.4
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5 48.	7 064	7 278	3 526	2.8	1.8	3.0
Turkmenistan	11 753	23 082	26 475	5 186	3.3	9.2	14.7
Uganda	8 626	14 203	14 788	429	6.2	6.3	4.1
Uzbekistan	12 492	21 624	23 419	844	4.4	8.5	8.3
Zambia	6 508	9 890	10 543	782	4.3	7.1	6.6
Zimbabwe	732	7 085	7 817	613	(7.5)	9.6	10.3
Average	**16 311**	**28 784**	**31 028**	**1 414**	**4.7**	**6.7**	**5.9**

Source: Statistics Division.

Table 2
Official development assistance receipts

Landlocked developing countries	Net official development assistance receipts (millions of United States dollars, 2011 constant prices) 2003	2010	2011	Official development assistance/gross national income (percentage) 2011	Aid for Trade disbursements (millions of United States dollars, 2011 constant prices) 2007	2011
Afghanistan	2 164	6 743	6 711	..	958	1 590
Armenia	337	362	378	3.5	95	124
Azerbaijan	400	166	292	0.5	88	158
Bhutan	110	141	144	9.0	30	70
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1 263	719	729	3.1	146	217
Botswana	37	163	121	0.7	15	16
Burkina Faso	760	1 134	996	9.8	264	252
Burundi	316	673	579	24.8	100	122
Central African Republic	71	280	272	12.6	30	93
Chad	352	514	468	5.5	35	59
Ethiopia	2 120	3 723	3 532	11.2	522	650
Kazakhstan	385	231	213	0.1	111	37
Kyrgyzstan	268	398	523	9.3	56	131

Landlocked developing countries	*Net official development assistance receipts (millions of United States dollars, 2011 constant prices)*			*Official development assistance/gross national income (percentage)*	*Aid for Trade disbursements (millions of United States dollars, 2011 constant prices)*	
	2003	*2010*	*2011*	*2011*	*2007*	*2011*
Lao People's Democratic Republic	422	448	397	5.2	150	157
Lesotho	106	270	259	8.9	19	38
Malawi	703	1 090	804	14.9	122	179
Mali	779	1 157	1 270	12.6	323	479
Mongolia	344	322	340	4.3	72	155
Nepal	642	880	892	4.7	127	278
Niger	670	792	646	10.9	103	107
Paraguay	69	110	94	0.4	28	27
Republic of Moldova	160	501	469	6.2	46	114
Rwanda	458	1 097	1 262	20.0	99	304
Swaziland	55	97	125	3.2	11	27
Tajikistan	201	465	355	5.5	53	129
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	362	198	193	1.9	46	42
Turkmenistan	38	46	38	0.2	1	3
Uganda	1 347	1 827	1 582	9.6	539	461
Uzbekistan	243	244	215	0.5	28	73
Zambia	1 059	970	1 046	5.9	118	178
Zimbabwe	248	782	716	7.4	20	91
Landlocked developing countries	**16 489**	**26 544**	**25 661**	**4.6**	**4 355**	**6 364**

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Table 3

External debt, debt service and debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative

Landlocked developing countries	*Total external debt (percentage of gross national income)*			*Total debt service (percentage of exports of goods, services and income)*			*Debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (millions of United States dollars)*	*Debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (millions of United States dollars)*
	2003	*2010*	*2011*	*2003*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2012*
Afghanistan	..	16.0	..	..	0.2	..	1 280	39
Armenia	68.7	64.3	68.3	11.0	33.4	25.4	–	–
Azerbaijan	28.4	14.6	14.9	7.1	1.4	4.9	–	–
Bhutan	83.9	63.9	65.0	..	13.5	11.1	–	–
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	75.3	32.2	27.6	21.4	9.6	4.9	2 060	2 829
Botswana	7.1	12.2	13.8	1.2	1.4	..	–	–
Burkina Faso	40.9	24.7	23.8	12.0	2.5	..	930	1 230
Burundi	173.5	31.6	26.9	64.2	2.1	3.4	1 366	108
Central African Republic	96.0	29.3	26.5	..	..	..	804	306
Chad	67.6	23.1	21.4	..	..	..	260	–
Ethiopia	86.1	24.8	27.2	7.3	3.9	6.1	3 275	3 309
Kazakhstan	79.9	91.9	77.9	34.8	58.3	34.6	–	–
Kyrgyzstan	115.7	..	..	21.9	22.3	12.0	–	–
Lao People's Democratic Republic	122.4	84.2	80.3	21.9	13.2	11.5	–	–
Lesotho	58.9	28.7	27.1	5.5	2.1	2.0	–	–
Malawi	130.6	21.1	22.3	6.7	1.7	1.3	1 628	1 596
Mali	73.2	27.4	29.1	6.6	2.5	..	895	2 009
Mongolia	97.5	44.4	32.7	34.1	5.0	2.1	–	–
Nepal	50.2	23.5	20.8	10.2	10.5	9.5	–	–
Niger	78.7	23.6	23.7	8.7	2.0	..	1 190	1 074
Paraguay	58.6	28.3	25.7	12.3	4.5	3.6	–	–
Republic of Moldova	95.4	76.4	72.0	11.5	14.4	12.8	–	–
Rwanda	85.7	16.4	17.5	15.3	2.4	2.1	1 316	519
Swaziland	20.8	19.9	15.5	1.3	1.9	..	–	–
Tajikistan	86.7	55.3	51.6	8.4	85.0	49.1	–	100
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	40.3	66.4	62.8	13.5	17.1	18.9	–	–

Landlocked developing countries	Total external debt (percentage of gross national income)			Total debt service (percentage of exports of goods, services and income)			Debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (millions of United States dollars)	Debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (millions of United States dollars)
	2003	2010	2011	2003	2010	2011	2012	2012
Turkmenistan	31.3	2.9	2.0	..	..	..	–	–
Uganda	73.4	19.3	23.5	9.8	1.8	1.7	1 950	3 524
Uzbekistan	53.0	19.1	17.8	..	..	..	–	–
Zambia	162.5	30.8	24.7	43.5	1.9	2.1	3 900	2 770
Zimbabwe	81.2	80.6	64.8	..	..	..	–	–
Landlocked developing countries	**65.7**	**44.5**	**39.9**	**23.1**	**27.5**	**20.9**	**20 854**	**19 413**

Source: World Bank and Statistics Division.

Table 4
International merchandise trade, exports and imports

Landlocked developing countries	Merchandise trade							
	Total exports (millions of United States dollars)		Total imports (millions of United States dollars)		Percentage of world exports		Terms of trade index (2000=100)	
	2003	2011	2003	2011	2003	2011	2003	2012
Afghanistan	144	376	2 101	6 390	0.00	0.00	111.8	139.1
Armenia	686	1 334	1 280	4 145	0.01	0.01	98.6	117.6
Azerbaijan	2 592	34 494	2 626	10 167	0.03	0.19	96.1	207.7
Bhutan	133	675	249	1 052	0.00	0.00	110.1	134.3
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1 598	8 332	1 616	7 664	0.02	0.05	98.5	179.1
Botswana	2 810	5 882	2 448	7 272	0.04	0.03	95.2	85.0
Burkina Faso	321	2 352	925	2 406	0.00	0.01	110.4	126.9
Burundi	38	123	157	752	0.00	0.00	89.6	149.1
Central African Republic	128	190	118	310	0.00	0.00	99.5	68.8
Chad	601	4 600	790	2 700	0.01	0.03	99.7	229.4
Ethiopia	496	2 875	2 686	8 896	0.01	0.02	96.6	130.6
Kazakhstan	12 927	87 603	8 409	37 056	0.17	0.48	100.7	236.7
Kyrgyzstan	582	1 972	717	4 261	0.01	0.01	110.6	108.3
Lao People's Democratic Republic	335	2 216	462	2 398	0.00	0.01	100.7	109.4

Landlocked developing countries	Merchandise trade: Total exports (millions of United States dollars) 2003	Total exports (millions of United States dollars) 2011	Total imports (millions of United States dollars) 2003	Total imports (millions of United States dollars) 2011	Percentage of world exports 2003	Percentage of world exports 2011	Terms of trade index (2000=100) 2003	Terms of trade index (2000=100) 2012
Lesotho	476	1 172	1 121	2 500	0.01	0.01	96.3	77.7
Malawi	525	1 425	786	2 428	0.01	0.01	87.1	95.9
Mali	928	2 391	1 271	3 390	0.01	0.01	121.0	172.1
Mongolia	616	4 818	801	6 598	0.01	0.03	104.8	206.1
Nepal	662	919	1 754	5 774	0.01	0.01	97.2	77.7
Niger	352	1 250	622	2 700	0.00	0.01	102.8	169.0
Paraguay	1 242	7 764	2 228	12 316	0.02	0.04	101.4	110.5
Republic of Moldova	790	2 217	1 399	5 191	0.01	0.01	102.1	101.5
Rwanda	63	464	259	1 776	0.00	0.00	99.4	214.9
Swaziland	1 638	1 910	1 519	1 950	0.02	0.01	102.1	110.1
Tajikistan	797	1 257	881	3 206	0.01	0.01	98.8	99.3
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1 367	4 455	2 306	7 007	0.02	0.02	96.6	88.3
Turkmenistan	3 632	13 000	2 512	7 400	0.05	0.07	100.8	239.1
Uganda	532	2 159	1 375	5 631	0.01	0.01	94.7	110.0
Uzbekistan	3 189	13 254	2 662	9 953	0.04	0.07	104.2	171.8
Zambia	980	9 001	1 574	7 178	0.01	0.05	94.4	183.1
Zimbabwe	1 670	3 512	..	4 400	0.02	0.02	97.5	105.0
Landlocked developing countries	**42 848**	**223 994**	**49 362**	**184 868**	**0.56**	**1.22**	**101.1**	**187.3**
Transit developing countries	**951 738**	**3 742 802**	**896 839**	**3 710 191**	**12.55**	**20.46**	..	..

Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Table 5
Trading across borders

Landlocked developing countries	*Number of documents required for export*	*Transit time for exports (days)*	*Cost to export (United States dollars per container)*	*Number of documents required for import*	*Transit time for imports (days)*	*Cost to import (United States dollars per container)*
Afghanistan	10	74	3 545	10	77	3 830
Armenia	5	13	1 815	8	18	2 195
Azerbaijan	8	38	3 430	10	38	3 490
Bhutan	9	38	2 230	12	38	2 330
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	8	19	1 425	7	23	1 747
Botswana	6	27	2 945	7	37	3 445
Burkina Faso	10	41	2 412	10	47	4 030
Burundi	10	32	2 965	11	46	5 005
Central African Republic	9	54	5 491	17	62	5 554
Chad	8	75	5 902	11	101	8 525
Ethiopia	7	42	2 160	9	44	2 660
Kazakhstan	9	81	4 685	12	69	4 665
Kyrgyzstan	8	63	4 160	10	75	4 700
Lao People's Democratic Republic	10	26	2 140	10	26	2 125
Lesotho	7	31	1 695	7	35	1 945
Malawi	10	34	2 175	9	43	2 870
Mali	6	26	2 202	9	31	3 067
Mongolia	10	49	2 555	11	50	2 710
Nepal	11	41	1 975	11	38	2 095
Niger	8	59	3 676	11	64	3 711
Paraguay	8	33	1 440	10	33	1 750
Republic of Moldova	7	32	1 545	7	35	1 870
Rwanda	8	29	3 245	8	31	4 990
Swaziland	8	18	1 880	8	27	2 085
Tajikistan	11	71	8 450	11	72	9 800
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	6	12	1 376	6	11	1 380
Uganda	7	33	3 050	9	33	3 215
Uzbekistan	13	80	4 585	14	99	4 750
Zambia	6	44	2 765	8	56	3 560

Landlocked developing countries	*Number of documents required for export*	*Transit time for exports (days)*	*Cost to export (United States dollars per container)*	*Number of documents required for import*	*Transit time for imports (days)*	*Cost to import (United States dollars per container)*
Zimbabwe	8	53	3 280	8	73	5 200
Average landlocked developing countries	**8**	**42**	**3 040**	**10**	**48**	**3 643**
Average transit developing countries	**8**	**23**	**1 268**	**8**	**27**	**1 567**

Source: World Bank, *Doing Business 2013: Smarter Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises.*

Table 6
Selected telecommunication indicators

	Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population				*Internet users per 100 population*
	Main lines		*Cellular*		
Landlocked developing countries	*2003*	*2011*	*2003*	*2011*	*2011*
Afghanistan	0.1	0.0	0.8	54.3	4.6
Armenia	18.4	18.6	3.7	103.6	..
Azerbaijan	11.2	18.1	12.6	108.7	50.8
Bhutan	3.8	3.7	0.4	65.6	21.0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	6.9	8.7	14.5	82.8	30.0
Botswana	7.2	7.4	24.3	142.8	7.0
Burkina Faso	0.5	0.8	1.8	45.3	3.0
Burundi	0.3	..	0.9	14.5	1.1
Central African Republic	0.2	0.1	1.0	25.0	2.2
Chad	0.1	0.3	0.7	31.8	1.9
Ethiopia	0.6	1.0	0.1	16.7	1.1
Kazakhstan	14.9	26.1	8.9	142.5	44.0
Kyrgyzstan	7.9	8.9	2.8	104.8	19.6
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1.2	1.7	2.0	87.2	9.0
Lesotho	1.7	1.6	6.2	47.9	4.2
Malawi	0.7	1.1	1.1	25.1	3.3
Mali	0.5	0.7	2.0	68.3	2.0
Mongolia	5.6	6.7	12.8	105.1	20.0
Nepal	1.4	2.8	0.3	43.8	9.0

Landlocked developing countries	Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population				Internet users per 100 population
	Main lines		Cellular		
	2003	2011	2003	2011	2011
Niger	0.2	0.6	0.7	27.0	1.3
Paraguay	4.9	5.6	31.2	99.4	23.9
Republic of Moldova	20.3	33.3	12.2	104.8	37.8
Rwanda	0.3	0.4	1.5	40.6	7.0
Swaziland	4.2	4.4	7.8	63.7	20.4
Tajikistan	3.9	5.4	0.8	90.6	13.0
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	25.9	20.0	38.3	109.4	56.7
Turkmenistan	8.1	10.7	0.2	68.8	5.0
Uganda	0.2	1.3	2.9	48.4	13.0
Uzbekistan	6.7	6.9	1.3	91.6	28.6
Zambia	0.8	0.6	2.2	60.6	11.[illegible]
Zimbabwe	2.4	2.8	2.9	72.1	15.7
Average landlocked developing countries	**3.0**	**3.9**	**3.1**	**54.5**	**11.3**

Source: World Bank.

Table 7
Foreign direct investment net inflows
(Millions of United States dollars)

Landlocked developing countries	2003	2011	2012
Afghanistan	58	83	94
Armenia	121	525	489
Azerbaijan	3 285	1 467	2 005
Bhutan	3	10	16
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	197	859	1 060
Botswana	418	414	293
Burkina Faso	29	42	40
Burundi	–	3	1
Central African Republic	11	37	71
Chad	713	282	323

Landlocked developing countries	*2003*	*2011*	*2012*
Ethiopia	465	627	970
Kazakhstan	2 092	13 903	14 022
Kyrgyzstan	46	694	372
Lao People's Democratic Republic	19	301	294
Lesotho	44	132	172
Malawi	66	129	129
Mali	132	556	310
Mongolia	132	4 715	4 452
Nepal	15	95	92
Niger	11	1 066	793
Paraguay	25	215	320
Republic of Moldova	74	281	159
Rwanda	3	106	160
Swaziland	(61)	93	90
Tajikistan	32	11	290
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	113	468	135
Turkmenistan	226	3 399	3 159
Uganda	202	894	1 721
Uzbekistan	83	1 467	1 094
Zambia	347	1 108	1 066
Zimbabwe	4	387	400
Landlocked developing countries	**8 904**	**34 369**	**34 592**

Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Table 8
Selected social development indicators

Landlocked developing countries	*Prevalence of undernourishment (percentage of population)*		*Human development index*		*Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)*		*Female to male labour force participation ratio*		*Percentage of women in national parliament*	
	2008	*2011*	*2005*	*2012*	*2003*	*2011*	*2005*	*2011*	*2003*	*2012*
Afghanistan	..	..	46.6	49.1	125.9	101.1	0.17	0.20	..	27.7
Armenia	5.0	5.0	73.2	74.4	25.7	17.5	0.75	0.70	3.1	8.4
Azerbaijan	5.0	5.0	69.0	70.9	61.0	44.7	0.87	0.90	10.5	16.0
Bhutan	..	..	64.8	67.6	77.7	53.7	0.82	0.86	9.3	8.5
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	27.5	24.1	64.7	66.9	71.1	50.6	0.75	0.79	18.5	25.4
Botswana	31.9	27.9	50.6	53.0	72.1	25.9	0.88	0.88	17.0	7.9
Burkina Faso	24.4	25.9	52.5	55.9	171.1	146.4	0.85	0.86	11.7	15.3
Burundi	72.4	73.4	47.8	50.9	158.3	139.1	1.02	1.02	18.4	30.5
Central African Republic	32.6	30.0	44.4	49.1	170.7	163.5	0.84	0.85	7.3	12.5
Chad	36.4	33.4	48.1	49.9	183.5	169.0	0.81	0.80	5.8	12.8
Ethiopia	43.8	40.2	55.2	59.7	118.2	77.0	0.86	0.87	7.7	27.8
Kazakhstan	5.0	5.0	65.2	67.4	37.9	28.3	0.86	0.86	10.4	24.3
Kyrgyzstan	8.6	6.4	66.6	68.0	41.8	30.6	0.71	0.71	10.0	23.3
Lao People's Democratic Republic	29.4	27.8	64.5	67.8	67.6	41.9	0.97	0.96	22.9	25.0
Lesotho	17.0	16.6	44.3	48.7	120.3	86.0	0.82	0.80	11.7	24.2
Malawi	23.0	23.1	49.0	54.8	142.6	82.6	0.92	1.04	9.3	22.3
Mali	9.5	7.9	49.0	51.9	203.0	175.6	0.54	0.53	10.2	10.2
Mongolia	27.6	24.2	66.0	68.8	52.2	30.7	0.85	0.83	10.5	3.9
Nepal	20.1	18.0	65.6	69.1	71.6	48.0	0.91	0.92	..	33.2
Niger	13.6	12.6	51.7	55.1	185.7	124.5	0.43	0.44	1.2	13.3
Paraguay	16.8	25.5	71.2	72.7	30.8	22.4	0.64	0.67	2.5	12.5
Republic of Moldova	5.0	5.0	67.9	69.6	21.1	16.0	0.92	0.85	12.9	19.8
Rwanda	34.2	28.9	52.3	55.7	134.2	54.1	1.02	1.01	25.7	56.3
Swaziland	27.3	27.0	45.9	48.9	125.0	103.6	0.61	0.62	3.1	13.6
Tajikistan	36.7	31.7	65.4	67.8	85.0	63.3	0.77	0.76	12.7	19.0
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5.0	5.0	73.8	75.0	14.3	9.6	0.66	0.62	18.3	30.9
Turkmenistan	5.0	5.0	64.4	65.2	65.5	52.5	0.63	0.61	26.0	16.8

Landlocked developing countries	Prevalence of undernourishment (percentage of population)		Human development index		Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)		Female to male labour force participation ratio		Percentage of women in national parliament	
	2008	2011	2005	2012	2003	2011	2005	2011	2003	2012
Uganda	31.0	34.6	50.2	54.5	124.9	89.9	0.96	0.96	24.7	35.0
Uzbekistan	7.9	6.1	67.2	68.6	57.1	48.6	0.66	0.64	7.2	22.0
Zambia	47.5	47.4	44.4	49.4	138.5	82.9	0.86	0.86	12.0	11.5
Zimbabwe	33.9	32.8	44.0	52.7	101.3	67.1	0.92	0.93	10.0	15.0
Average landlocked developing countries	**23.6**	**22.6**	**57.6**	**60.6**	**109.5**	**80.9**	**0.78**	**0.79**	**12.1**	**20.2**
Average transit developing countries	**17.6**	**16.8**	**61.2**	**63.8**	**58.8**	**43.7**	**0.73**	**0.74**	**14.03**	**17.4**

Source: Statistics Division.

Table 9
Manufacturing value addition and inflation

Landlocked developing countries	Manufacturing value addition (percentage of gross domestic product)			Inflation, average consumer prices (percentage change)	
	2003	2010	2011	2011	2012
Afghanistan	17.1	12.9	13.1	10.4	4.4
Armenia	16.8	10.7	10.6	7.7	2.5
Azerbaijan	9.4	5.8	..	7.9	1.1
Bhutan	7.4	9.1	9.3	8.9	9.7
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	14.7	13.9	13.3	9.9	4.5
Botswana	4.1	4.0	4.2	8.5	7.5
Burkina Faso	14.3	7.8	6.7	2.8	3.6
Burundi	14.5	10.5	10.0	14.9	11.8
Central African Republic	7.3	..	..	1.2	5.2
Chad	8.0	..	..	1.9	7.7
Ethiopia	5.7	3.9	3.6	33.2	22.8
Kazakhstan	15.3	13.1	13.5	8.3	5.1
Kyrgyzstan	14.6	18.9	20.6	16.6	2.8
Lao People's Democratic Republic	8.7	7.5	7.6	7.6	4.3
Lesotho	21.2	12.8	11.7	5.6	5.3

Landlocked developing countries	*Manufacturing value addition (percentage of gross domestic product)*			*Inflation, average consumer prices (percentage change)*	
	2003	*2010*	*2011*	*2011*	*2012*
Malawi	11.9	12.0	11.9	7.6	3.3
Mali	2.8	..	..	3.1	21.3
Mongolia	7.5	7.3	7.1	7.7	5.3
Nepal	8.4	6.5	6.4	9.6	4.7
Niger	6.3	..	..	2.9	15.0
Paraguay	15.0	12.2	11.9	8.3	8.3
Republic of Moldova	18.3	12.7	13.5	7.7	0.5
Rwanda	6.8	6.6	6.6	5.7	3.8
Swaziland	39.9	42.6	42.2	6.1	6.3
Tajikistan	31.3	9.5	8.3	12.4	8.9
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	17.5	14.4	13.9	3.9	5.8
Turkmenistan	18.6	..	..	5.3	4.9
Uganda	7.5	8.3	8.2	18.7	14.1
Uzbekistan	9.2	9.0	8.6	12.8	12.1
Zambia	12.0	8.9	8.4	8.7	6.6
Zimbabwe	13.6	17.9	17.1	3.5	3.7
Average landlocked developing countries	**13.1**	**11.5**	**11.5**	**10.0**	**7.3**
Average transit developing countries	**14.1**	**14.1**	**14.6**	**7.2**	**5.8**

Source: World Bank, International Monetary Fund.

United Nations A/68/158

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 July 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 145 of the preliminary list*
Administration of justice at the United Nations

Activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/241, reaffirmed that the informal resolution of conflict was a crucial element of the system of administration of justice. The Assembly emphasized that all possible use should be made of the informal system in developing a culture of dialogue and amicable resolution of disputes.

The present report is the fifth covering the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, which delivers workplace informal conflict resolution services to the Secretariat; funds and programmes (United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Office for Project Services and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women); and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The report contains information on the activities carried out by the Office in cross-cutting areas during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2012. It focuses on Secretariat-specific activities, including dispute resolution services offered to staff; initiatives to promote competence in conflict management and other outreach activities; and recommendations on systemic observations. Detailed information on the specific activities undertaken for the funds and programmes, and UNHCR is provided in separate annual reports.

* A/68/50.

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The Office appreciates the continued support of the General Assembly for the use of informal conflict resolution as a key first step in addressing workplace disputes. The Office also acknowledges the backing given by the Assembly to the system-wide implementation of measures aimed at encouraging recourse to informal conflict resolution and at empowering the Organization to effectively address conflict.

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I. Informal conflict resolution

A. Workplace conflict and its impact

1. Conflict is an integral dynamic in organizations and can result from internal and external factors. Conflict is not inherently bad, and disagreements are often essential for participatory governance. However, unmanaged and ill-managed conflict has a negative impact on an organization, its workforce and the constituencies it serves. It poses risks that can threaten the ability of an organization to achieve its strategic objectives.

2. Resolving conflict by using collaborative, conciliatory and pre-emptive approaches can help in the construction of shared realities and in adapting to changing circumstances. In addition, it can help to minimize the negative impact of conflict and mitigate associated risks.

B. Mandate and areas of work

3. As the designated informal conflict resolution system within the Organization, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services is mandated to offer dispute resolution services to visitors; promote competence in conflict management (hereafter, referred to as "conflict competence"); and make recommendations based on systemic observations. The essential elements of those services are summarized below.

4. The Office offers dispute resolution services through the ombudsman practice and mediation by using interest-based approaches to conflict resolution and involving methods such as facilitation, problem solving, shuttle diplomacy and conflict coaching. The services are provided on a case-by-case basis for individuals and groups of individuals, offering both direct and in-person methods when possible, as well as remote access by telephone, videoconference and Skype.

5. Conflict competence encompasses the knowledge, skills and attitude that enable an organization to engage in conflict situations constructively. On an individual level, it involves developing cognitive, emotional and behavioural skills that engender trust and communication; in team settings, it involves creating a climate that builds trust and promotes collaboration; and in an organizational context, it involves aligning missions, policies and performance standards to reinforce the importance of informal conflict resolution. The Office promotes conflict competence through the design and dissemination of relevant thematic material, using both in-person and remote channels. Outreach initiatives of the Office are aimed at promoting informal conflict resolution and at raising awareness about the availability of the informal forum.

6. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/233, the role of the Ombudsman is to report on broad systemic issues that he or she identifies, as well as issues that are brought to his or her attention, in order to promote greater harmony in the workplace. The Office identifies such broad-based systemic issues on an ongoing basis; shares them collaboratively with key stakeholders and partners within the Organization; and makes recommendations based on the observations.

C. Core principles of practice

7. In the pursuit of its mandate and scope of work, the Office is guided by the core principles of independence, neutrality, confidentiality and informality, which are aligned with internationally established standards of practice for the organizational ombudsman profession.

Independence

8. The Office maintains independence from other organizational entities, organs or officials and has direct access to the Secretary-General, the executive heads of the funds and programmes, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and senior management throughout the Organization, as needed; access to information relevant to cases, except medical records; and access to individuals in the Organization who request advice, information or an opinion on any particular matter.

Neutrality

9. The Office serves as an advocate for justice and fair, equitably administered processes, not on behalf of any individual within the Organization, taking into account the rights and obligations of the Organization and the staff member, and the equity of the situation.

Confidentiality

10. The Office maintains strict confidentiality and does not disclose any information about individual cases or visits from staff members; it cannot be compelled by any United Nations organ or official to testify.

Informality

11. In respect of its informality, the Office does not keep records for the United Nations or any other party; does not conduct formal investigations or accept legal notice on behalf of the United Nations; does not having decision-making powers; and does not make determinative findings or judgements.

II. Overview of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services

A. Organization of the Office

12. The Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services comprises three pillars that serve their respective constituencies: the Secretariat;[1] the funds and programmes (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)); and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The constituencies

[1] The pillar serving the Secretariat is hereafter referred to as the "Office of the Ombudsman" or the "Office".

are served by dedicated pillars as established and administered by the respective entities. Constituencies served include Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters, field locations and special political missions.

13. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/228, established regional offices and a mediation division in order to improve services and access to staff globally. The regional offices are located in Bangkok, Entebbe, Uganda (the office had previously been located in Khartoum), Geneva, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna.

B. Joint activities

14. During the reporting period, ongoing collaborative activities by the three pillars of the Office included consistent and regular sharing of best practices and challenges related to case content and case handling; maintenance of a common data platform; and development of a joint educational and outreach brochure.

C. Scope of coverage

15. The Office serves staff globally, including at Headquarters and in the field. The stressful environment for field staff often contributes to the emergence of urgent and highly sensitive issues. Rapid response to critical cases is provided by regional ombudsmen and a roster of on-call mediators and ombudsmen. The ombudsmen for the funds and programmes provide services to their global constituencies from New York, and the ombudsman for UNHCR does so from Geneva.

16. The scope of the work of the Office is reflected not only in the source or number of cases received but also in their complexity. The Office serves Secretariat staff globally. Non-staff personnel do not have access to informal dispute resolution through the Office. However, the Office continues to be contacted by non-staff personnel, including individual contractors and consultants, seeking redress and recourse to informal dispute resolution. On an exceptional basis, and when feasible within existing resources, limited services have been provided by the Office. Cases involving United Nations Volunteers are also handled on an exceptional basis as and when they concern peacekeeping missions and Secretariat staff members. Ombudsmen for the funds and programmes provide services to all contract holders and on a limited basis to United Nations Volunteers, depending on where they are the latter are assigned.

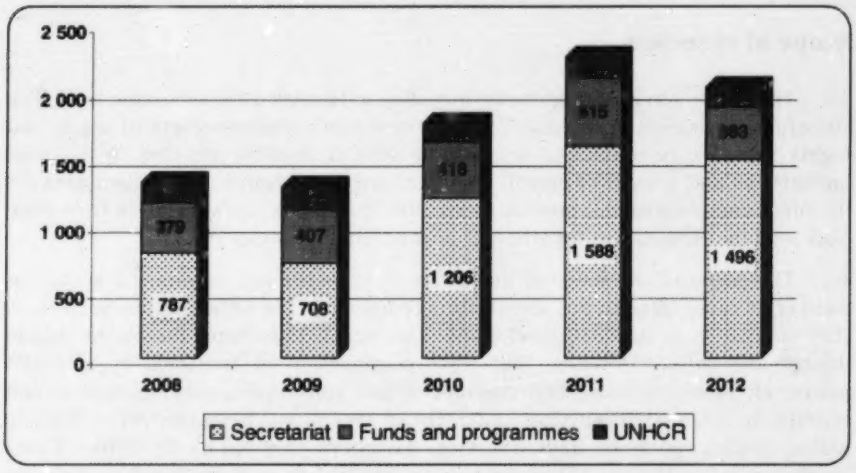
17. As reported by the Secretary-General in annex V of his report on the administration of justice at the United Nations (A/67/265 and Corr.1), the Office considers it important to provide access to informal resolution to all United Nations personnel, regardless of category, owing to the potential impact of such conflict on United Nations staff and organizational productivity. Permitting non-staff personnel of the Secretariat to access the informal system would require additional resources and an amendment to the terms of reference of the Office.

III. Informal conflict resolution: overview of cases and trends

A. Ombudsman cases

18. During the reporting period, the Office opened a total of 2,039 cases, of which 1,496 originated from the Secretariat, 383 from the funds and programmes (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN-Women), and 160 from UNHCR (see figure I). A case constitutes at least one workplace issue brought to the Office by a United Nations staff member seeking informal conflict resolution or other assistance. General and simple inquiries received from visitors do not constitute cases, although the Office helps all visitors and redirects them appropriately.

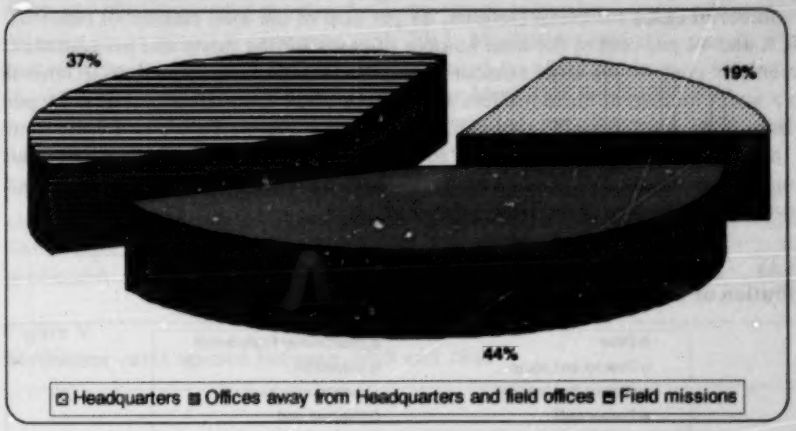
Figure I
Cases opened by the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services



19. Since the redesign and establishment of the new system of administration of justice in 2009, the total number of cases handled by the Office increased from 1,287 in 2009 to 2,039 in 2012, representing an increase of 58 per cent. The five-year period from 2008 to 2012 saw an average annual growth rate of 9 per cent. During that period, there was a sharp increase in volume in some years and a marginal decline in others. The complexity of factors involved in conflict situations makes it difficult to discern or forecast trends in the volume of cases.

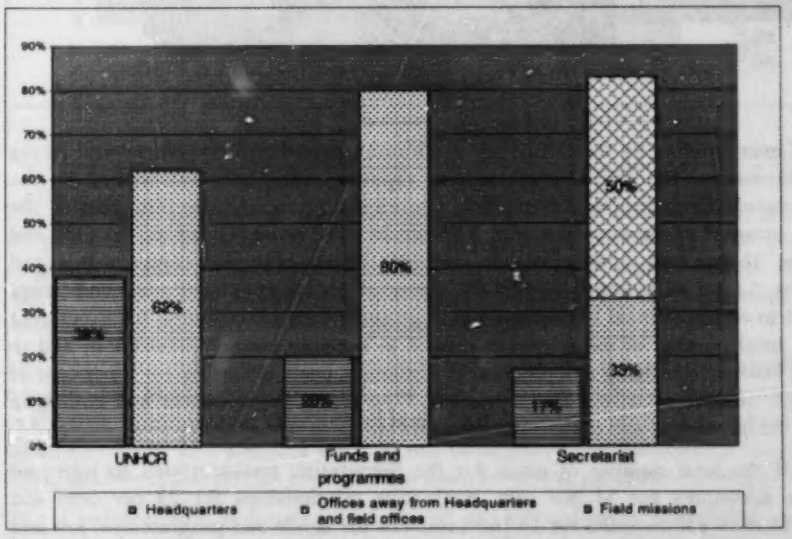
20. In 2012, 44 per cent of the total number of cases handled by the Office emanated from offices away from Headquarters, country offices and field offices; 37 per cent from field missions (specific only to the Secretariat); and 19 per cent from Headquarters (see figure II).

Figure II
Distribution of cases by location for the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, 2012



21. The distribution of cases emanating from Headquarters, from offices away from Headquarters and field offices, and from field missions for each of the three pillars is reflected in figure III. The figures indicate where the cases emanated from, and not where the cases were opened or serviced.

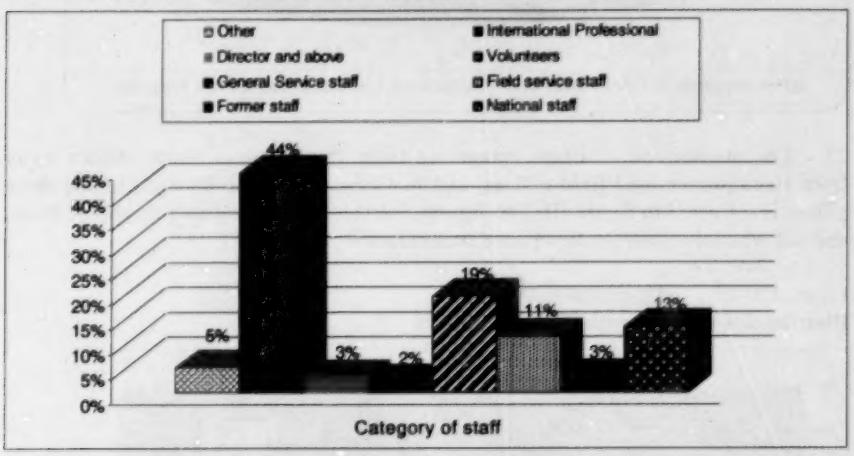
Figure III
Distribution of cases with the three pillars



Note: Headquarters include New York for the Secretariat, New York and Copenhagen for the funds and programmes, and Geneva and Budapest for UNHCR; offices away from Headquarters and field offices include various country and field offices for the Secretariat, funds and programmes and UNHCR; and field missions refer to the Secretariat alone and include peacekeeping and special political missions.

22. As illustrated in figure IV, 44 per cent of the total number of cases for the Office during the reporting period came from staff in the international Professional category. More specifically, staff in that category accounted for 44 per cent of the total number of cases for the Secretariat, 61 per cent of the total number of cases for UNHCR and 44 per cent of the total number of cases for the funds and programmes. Nineteen per cent of the total number of cases came from support staff (General Service staff) located at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters; 11 per cent from field service staff (applicable only to the Secretariat); and 13 per cent from national staff (including staff in the Professional and General Service categories) (see figure IV). The category "Other" includes non-staff personnel and accounted for 5 per cent of the total number of cases.

Figure IV
Distribution of cases by occupational group



23. Cases handled by the Office are often multifaceted and involve several issues and sub-issues. The Office uses uniform reporting categories established by the International Ombudsman Association. The categories accounting for most of the issues brought to the attention of the Office in 2012 were related to: (a) jobs and careers, 31 per cent; evaluative relationships, 23 per cent; and compensation and benefits, 13 per cent. Legal, regulatory, financial and compliance issues, and issues related to organizational leadership and management each accounted for 8 per cent of the total number of cases. Issues related to services and administration, and to safety, health, well-being and physical environment each accounted for 5 per cent of the total number of cases. The remaining 7 per cent involved peer and colleague relationships, values and ethics, and other matters.

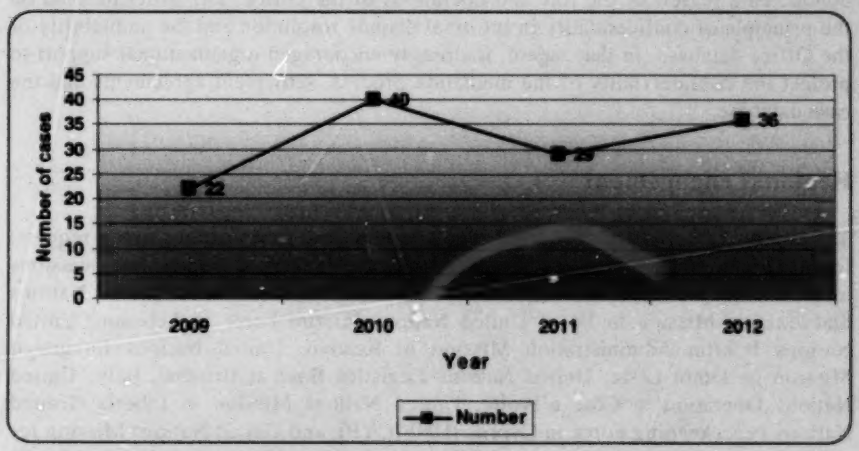
24. Of the total number of cases for the Secretariat, issues related to jobs and careers accounted for 31 per cent, evaluative relationships for 23 per cent and compensation and benefits for 14 per cent. For the funds and programmes, job and career issues accounted for 34 per cent, evaluative relationships for 20 per cent, and compensation and benefits for 12 per cent. For UNHCR, job and career issues accounted for 26 per cent, evaluative relationships for 24 per cent, and compensation and benefits for 9 per cent.

B. Mediation cases

25. In 2012, the Mediation Service opened 36 cases, including 30 cases emanating from the Secretariat and 6 cases from the funds and programmes, representing an increase of 24 per cent compared with 2011. Mediation techniques are an intrinsic part of dispute resolution and are regularly used by ombudsmen in resolving cases. In addition to the 36 cases opened through the Mediation Service in 2012, the Office continued to mediate cases informally as part of its case work. The cases are included in the total statistics indicated in paragraph 20 of the present report.

26. Since its establishment in 2009, the Mediation Service has seen an average annualized growth rate of 13 per cent in the number of cases opened (see figure V). The complexity of factors involved in conflict situations makes it difficult to discern predictable trends or attribute specific causes to changes in the volume of cases.

Figure V
Mediation cases opened between 2009 and 2012



27. Of the total number of cases mediated in 2012, 42 per cent were self referrals; 27 per cent were referred by the United Nations Dispute Tribunal; 25 per cent originated from ombudsman cases; and 3 per cent were referred by the Administration. The remaining 3 per cent of mediated cases were referred by miscellaneous sources across the Organization.

28. Mediation cases are often complex and could involve extensive multiparty negotiations. Mediation is applicable for diverse issues, including interpersonal and evaluative relationships; contractual status and terms of separation, which often entail emotional and sensitive matters; and compliance and disciplinary matters. In 2012, the Mediation Service intervened in cases involving groups and multiple parties.

29. Confidentiality is a core principle and an internationally established standard of the ombudsman and mediation practices. Disclosure by the Office of any information relating to settlements reached through mediation, or matters discussed in mediation or ombudsman case proceedings, would constitute a breach of confidentiality impermissible by the standards of those practices and would ultimately contribute to undermining the trust and confidence attached to the

processes by the parties. The only exception to the privilege of confidentiality is in situations where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

30. The confidentiality of the mediation process — including the agreement to participate in mediation, in discussions held during mediation and in settlements reached at the end of the proceedings — is essential to safeguarding the identity of visitors. Confidentiality remains one of the key guarantees that mediation offers and is a tool that serves to encourage the use of the informal channel for dispute resolution; for parties to engage in honest dialogue aimed at consensus-building; and for the realization of the many benefits of informal resolution (including creative problem-solving and building trust among parties). Any disclosure, formal or informal, of matters related to mediation cases risks being an impediment to encouraging informal dispute resolution within the Organization, thereby eroding the value of mediation. It could also damage the reputation of the Office within the Organization.

31. During the reporting period, an independent, external panel of experts conducted a review of the role and operations of the Office. The panel focused on the principle of confidentiality in informal dispute resolution and the auditability of the Office database. In that regard, it strongly encouraged organizational support to protect the confidentiality of the mediation process, settlement agreements and the case database.

C. Regional engagement

32. In 2012, the Office conducted regular and ad hoc interventions (upon request) for staff and management of the following organizations, bodies and missions located at duty stations that do not have a resident ombudsman: United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti; United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo; United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste; United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy; United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; United Nations Mission in Liberia; United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP); and United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. Visits were made to the remote locations of Juba and Rumbek, South Sudan, in association with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); Khartoum, El Fasher and Nyala, the Sudan, in association with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); Matadi, Kalemie, Lubumbashi, Goma and Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kigali, in association with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; and the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials. In addition, visits were undertaken to the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

33. Intervention was done directly through in-person contact and remotely by telephone, online media, videoconference and Skype. In-person intervention is crucial in the field of conflict resolution. It provides the human element essential for building trust and confidence in the process and serves to make the Office more accessible as

a forum. Staff members continue to highlight the need for greater representation of the Office in respect of an in-person presence, in particular in the field. In 2012, in-person intervention was provided through its presence at Headquarters and at major duty stations, and through the mission visits described above.

34. Mission visits are conducted in consultation with mission management and related staff associations and are often multipurpose in scope, comprising case intake and resolution; outreach activities and the promotion of conflict competence; and stakeholder engagement and partnering.

IV. Outreach activities: building partnerships for conflict competence and conflict prevention

35. The outreach efforts of the Office are aimed at promoting the informal resolution of workplace concerns. They focus primarily on building substantive skills in conflict management and reinforce the goal to resolve disputes early and at the lowest possible level. Efforts include developing conflict competence aimed at the timely and effective management of workplace concerns; building greater awareness about the presence and value of the breadth of services offered by the Office; and establishing working partnerships with stakeholders.

A. Enhancing conflict competence

36. Contributing to the development of conflict competence in the Organization is one of the several ways in which the Office works to encourage and empower staff to informally resolve disputes. Conflict competence is essential for effectively addressing workplace disagreements early, thereby preventing them from escalating into intractable conflicts. Preventive approaches to conflict resolution not only help to mitigate downside risks to the Organization but also offer opportunities to transform potentially volatile situations into ones of mutual understanding.

37. In 2012, a series of skills development events were organized by the Office at Headquarters, including interactive workshops on conflict management for staff in general, and for areas such as the Field Personnel Division of the Department of Field Support. The regional ombudsman in Nairobi gave a presentation at a team-building exercise on change management and defusing conflict to a section of the Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and at several workshops held at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The regional ombudsman in Santiago, in cooperation with the Training Section of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), developed a presentation on effective conflict management, which has been offered on a division/unit basis. A workshop on topics such as "Dealing with difficult colleagues" and "Engaging in difficult conversations" was conducted by the regional ombudsman in Bangkok. The Office also conducted a series of pilot workshops on conflict competence at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, ECA, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. The United Nations Ombudsman gave a keynote speech on conflict resolution and conducted workshops at the World Food Programme on collaborative negotiation.

B. Outreach efforts to raise awareness about informal conflict resolution

38. In 2012, the Office also focused its outreach efforts on raising awareness about the scope and benefits of the services it offers. Accordingly, efforts targeted a diverse audience, including staff members at large; senior and executive management; and relevant departmental units, staff associations and other groups within the Organization. The outreach strategy employed various media formats, including traditional in-person interaction with the media, technology-based media and print media.

39. The Office conducted informational sessions both in person and remotely across the Organization's operational locations, including during induction sessions for new staff. Informational sessions were conducted at UNEP, UN-Habitat, and the Joint Medical Service and the Office of the Staff Council at the United Nations Office at Nairobi; UNAMID; UNMISS; MONUSCO (new staff induction); the Security and Safety Section of ESCAP (management and staff); ECLAC (new staff induction); and the Secretariat and agencies of the United Nations system during the Common Induction Programme.

40. Informational sessions were also conducted in collaboration with other relevant actors in the Organization, including sessions aimed specifically at providing incentives for informal dispute resolution. The informational sessions comprised workshops on the internal justice system in collaboration with the United Nations Dispute Tribunal in Nairobi; a joint collaborative project with the Staff Counseling Unit, Conduct and Discipline Unit, Field Staff Union, National Staff Association and Office of Internal Audit Services in Kinshasa; several briefings to managers on the administration of justice, in particular on mitigating litigation risks, organized with the Legal Unit of Human Resources Management Service in Geneva; briefings on the administration of justice held in Geneva for managers at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; and a briefing session for the Junior Professional Orientation and Development Programme, organized by the Staff Development and Learning Section in Geneva. The Office participated in workshops held by the Conduct and Discipline Unit in the field and at Headquarters, and in the United Nations Secretariat Human Resources Network Conference on the theme "Towards a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce", held in New York from 4 to 8 June 2012.

41. During the reporting period, the Office encouraged the use of the informal system for the resolution of workplace disputes through presentations at the town hall meetings of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, at meetings of the Division of Conference Management in Geneva and Kinshasa and at introductory and ongoing meetings with broad-based stakeholders. Meetings were held with the high-level management of various departments at ECA; the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); UNMISS; UNAMID; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; the International Organization for Migration; the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, Uganda; MONUSCO; UNEP; OHCHR; UNODC; the United Nations Office at Nairobi; ECLAC; and ESCAP.

42. Marking the tenth anniversary since the establishment of the Office in 2002, the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations hosted an expert panel discussion on the theme "Imagination and integrity: mediation in building institutions" followed by a commemorative event in New York. Events were also held at some regional offices.

43. The website of the Office continued to be an important tool for reaching out to staff and for sharing informational material about conflict resolution services. In 2012, the website was visited an average of 2,500 times per month, compared with an average of 2,100 times per month in 2011, constituting an increase of 13 per cent.

44. The Office undertook initiatives to promote its visibility and sustained presence online through articles and interviews published on local Intranet sites at field locations and on iSeek, including the UNFICYP newsletter, *The Blue Beret*; an interview published in the local Geneva newsletter, *UN Special*; and an interview with the Ombudsman on personal accountability published on iSeek as part of an initiative led by the Department of Management on accountability.

45. The Office developed a joint brochure for the Secretariat, the funds and programmes, and UNHCR. The brochures, together with jointly designed posters were widely distributed and strategically placed across the field operations and Headquarters of the Secretariat's. In addition, a commemorative booklet was produced and distributed during the event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Ombudsman function in the Secretariat (see para. 42 above). Fact sheets and handouts were used regularly as part of the outreach strategy of the Office. A series of educational articles, including on such topics as engaging in difficult conversations, constructively conveying and receiving feedback and the value of apologies, were disseminated to promote conflict competence.

C. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

46. During the reporting period, the United Nations Ombudsman continued to engage with stakeholders at the senior level, through participation in meetings of the Management Performance Board; the Management Committee; and the Staff-Management Committee held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in 2012.

47. Participation in high-level meetings allows the United Nations Ombudsman to engage directly with senior managers at the strategic level. Such engagement is crucial to sharing the observations and recommendations made by the Office in the course of its work and to understanding the challenges faced by the administration and senior management in relation to them.

48. In 2012, the United Nations Ombudsman continued to have direct access to the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet to discuss measures to develop conflict competence and promote informal resolution in the Organization.

49. In addition, meetings with management and staff representatives at Headquarters and in the field formed an integral part of the partnerships formed by the Office. In 2012, ombudsmen met with management and administrative units at UNEP, UN-Habitat, ECA, the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Ethics Office, UNCTAD, OHCHR, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

the United Nations Office at Geneva, and ECE; with mission management at UNAMID, UNMISS and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei; and with the Organizational Development and Staffing Unit at ESCAP. Meetings were held with staff representatives at ITC and at the duty stations where regional ombudsman are based; the National Staff Association at UNAMID, UNMISS and MONUSCO; the Field Staff Union at MONUSCO and at the Entebbe Support Base. During its participation in the Staff Management Committee meeting held in Arusha in June 2012, the Office offered to assist with the development and delivery of conflict management training modules for staff representatives. Accordingly, a pilot was conducted at the Hague, the Netherlands, in partnership with the staff representatives at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

50. In 2012, the Mediation Service participated in a plenary meeting of the judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal held in Nairobi.

Office of Human Resources Management: staff development

51. The Office continued to collaborate with the Office of Human Resources Management in its training activities related to mediation, negotiation and informal conflict resolution.

Office of Human Resources Management: Medical Services Division

52. The Office and the Medical Services Division have recognized the potential for strengthening the collaboration between the two entities beyond a common involvement in individual cases.

53. Conflict is inherently stressful, and poorly managed stress affects staff health and well-being. In recognition of this, the Office has sought the collaboration of the staff counsellor community. In 2012, the Office and the Medical Services Division discussed the creation of a working group to help various agencies of the United Nations system to address issues related to health and well-being and took joint initiatives to promote a pilot initiative for the inception of proposals in that regard.

Department of Field Support: Field Personnel Division

54. The Office continued its ongoing interactions with the Field Personnel Division, in view of the large number of cases from field operations. The monthly meetings included feedback on procedural justice and communications in mission downsizing. The feedback has been incorporated into the workshops and communication materials of the Department of Field Support.

Office of Staff Legal Assistance

55. The Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services continued to work with the Office of Staff Legal Assistance on cases requiring legal counsel and on a number of matters both at Headquarters and in the field, which were resolved informally. The option of referring cases to the Office of Staff Legal Assistance provides a useful step for staff who are interested in exploring informal resolution but who need to understand the legal framework of their cases. Since the Office of the Ombudsman does not render legal advice, access to independent and confidential legal advice from the Office of Staff Legal Assistance assists staff

members in their decision-making process. It is particularly helpful to have legal officers of the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, with the consent of their clients, participate in mediation proceedings.

External partnerships

56. Partnerships with organizations in the broader United Nations system are essential in order to draw synergies and harmonize practices in a complex and dynamic environment. In that context, the Office engages with its fellow ombudsmen and mediators of the United Nations and related international organizations. The United Nations Ombudsman serves as the standing chair of the United Nations and Related International Organizations group. The 10th annual meeting of ombudsmen and mediators of the group was held in Santiago in January 2012 and was organized under the auspices of ECLAC and the regional office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services in Santiago. The meeting was attended by ombudsmen from the Secretariat, the funds and programmes, and UNHCR; the World Food Programme; the International Labour Organization; the International Civil Aviation Organization; the World Bank Group; the International Monetary Fund; the Pan American Health Organization; and the African Development Bank.

57. The Mediation Service of the Office of Ombudsman continued to partner with the World Bank to maintain a roster of on-call international mediators to support the work of the regional ombudsmen who serve staff in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Europe and Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia, and the Pacific. In 2012, the Office, in partnership with the World Bank, conducted a training programme for candidates on the roster of on-call mediators to raise awareness about the practice of mediation in the United Nations context.

V. Root causes of conflict: systemic issues

A. Identification of issues and reporting

58. In paragraph 26 of its resolution 67/241, the General Assembly welcomed the recommendations made by the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services to address systemic issues.

59. A systemic issue is characterized by the existence of the issue, independent of the individuals involved. The conflict stems from issues that are more deeply rooted or from existing gaps in the Organization, such as those found in its policies, procedures, practices and structure, all of which influence organizational culture.

60. The identification of systemic issues is informed by the cases and issues brought forward by staff; issues identified during interactions with the parties involved in conflicts; ongoing dialogue with stakeholders; and direct observation. In its discussions, the Office safeguards the confidentiality of its visitors.

B. Selected cross-cutting issues

61. The present report provides an update on the issues of performance management, and investigations and disciplinary procedures, while placing the latter in the wider context of conduct management. It also addresses issues regarding the

Organization's response to staff with service-related injuries, and staff with partial medical clearance to serve. The office recognizes the ongoing efforts of the Organization to address such issues and hopes that the report will contribute to continued organizational efforts for improvement.

Performance management: update

62. In his previous report on the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (A/67/172), the Secretary-General discussed the performance management matters that concern all staff and managers. Staff concerns about performance management include lack of managerial guidance and lack of acknowledgement of efforts; inadequate bidirectional engagement in the process; and perceived abuse and injustices in evaluation. Concerns expressed by managers include insufficient structural and procedural support in providing open and honest feedback to supervisees.

Ongoing efforts and opportunities

63. The Office continued to engage with staff and management representatives in respect of the impact of performance management on workplace conflicts. It provided upward feedback to relevant senior officials; continued its engagement with the Office of Human Resources Management; and participated at a manager's forum, meetings of the Management Performance Board and at the human resources network conference.

64. The Office delivered interactive workshops to staff in general and to such entities as the Department of Field Support; delivered presentations in the Induction Course for Senior Leaders on the linkages between performance management and conflict in the context of the system of administration of justice; and provided input into the Organization's training modules, with a view to effectively addressing performance management-related conflict. It engaged with the Department of Management and contributed to the lessons-learned guide for managers in respect of performance management.

65. The Office recognizes the considerable efforts being made by the Office of Human Resources Management in respect of performance management, including the continuous enhancement of the tools available in that area. It notes that while performance management is a responsibility shared between managers and staff, the tone is often set at the top.

66. In that context, it welcomes the new induction course for senior leaders as a potential vehicle for strengthening the management culture. It also takes note of the revised terms of reference of the Management Performance Board (see ST/SGB/2013/2, para. 1.1(d)), which would conduct yearly reviews of the performance management and development system. That approach has the potential to systemically address performance management issues at the highest level.

Investigations and disciplinary cases: update

67. The issue of investigations and disciplinary cases has been raised by the Office in previous reports of the Secretary-General.[2] Despite recognized efforts by the Organization, fielding a prompt investigation in response to every formal complaint that merits investigation appears to remain a challenge. Both staff and managers have raised concerns to the Office in that regard.

Ongoing efforts and opportunities

68. In addition to ongoing efforts to improve investigation processes, there is opportunity to examine allegations of misconduct in the larger context of conduct management. The framing provides for a wider systemic approach to fostering respectful workplace behaviour.

69. In 2012, the Office collaborated with conduct and discipline units at Headquarters and in the field. It found that many cases of alleged harassment, abuse of authority or discrimination might have benefited from early and informal resolution, thereby preventing escalation to formal investigation channels.

70. The Office also found that the framing of issues and the fear of reprisal were potential obstacles to informal resolution.

71. The way in which a problem is framed determines the forum and manner in which it is addressed. Very often, colleagues, managers and other "first responders" influence the framing of issues, in particular in the early stages of a conflict (see A/67/172, paras. 120 and 121). Framing issues related to abrasiveness or incivility as harassment or abuse of authority can have an impact on the manner in which they are addressed.

72. In dealing with stakeholders, the Office has observed a somewhat persistent belief that managerial involvement should or could take place only when there are formal complaints. In reality, prompt managerial action in conflict situations or early referral to relevant third parties could prevent escalation to formal investigations. There is opportunity to develop an understanding at all levels about the role of staff and management in early and informal resolution, and to shift the discourse from punitive action to fostering a dialogue-oriented work climate.

73. The Office often deals with staff members who are comfortable discussing issues relating to disrespect, poor communication or abrasiveness in confidence but who are unwilling to allow ombudsmen to take up matters, citing the fear of reprisal, indicating that this may be a factor that keeps staff from seeking informal resolution, leaving matters to be escalated to formal processes.

74. There is opportunity for managers to demonstrate their support for informal conflict resolution, to encourage their staff to seek neutral third-party assistance early on and to constructively engage with the Office when requested. There is opportunity for the Administration to clarify that retaliation against a staff member seeking assistance from any support made available to them by the Organization, including the Office of the Ombudsman, will not be tolerated.

[2] See A/64/314, paras. 72 and 73; A/65/303, para. 83; A/66/224, paras. 82 and 83; and A/67/172, paras. 140-146.

Service-incurred injuries and illness

75. In 2012, the Office also handled cases related to compensation claims for service-incurred injuries and illness. The cases involved issues such as the length of time it took the Organization to process claims for entitlements designed to mitigate the loss of capacity to work, or special medical expenses and insurance claims.[3] In working with relevant stakeholders, it became apparent that the various steps necessary to substantiating and approving a claim, across departments and geographical locations, made the system structurally vulnerable to delays. Additionally, focal points were limited to working within their departmental responsibilities, and the overall requirements necessary for processing claims were not coordinated. It appears that the expansion of peacekeeping, with the concomitant additional cases of this nature, has not been mirrored in the set-up of the Advisory Board on Compensation Claims at Headquarters and of the capacity of the Medical Service to provide the required expert input.

Ongoing efforts and opportunities

76. The Office has been working with stakeholders, including the Department of Field Support, the Department of Management and the Emergency Preparedness Support Team in the Office of Human Resources Management with respect to the issue. In some instances, with the consent of staff, case meetings have been held with all stakeholders concerned, which have proved to be a collaborative way of working in the interest of both the individual concerned and the Organization. Work is ongoing in respect of training, raising awareness and developing guidelines and checklists, based on consultations across departments.

77. A shift from the transactional processing of benefit claims to more inclusive attentiveness paid to injured or ailing staff members could represent a caring approach.[4] In addition, it could reduce the probability of disputes escalating into the need for formal channels, including litigation, which could have considerable legal, reputational and financial repercussions. It is understood that checks and balances are needed where the Organization's finances are concerned. Such checks and balances, however, need to be appropriately funded or they will control overspending on the one hand and generate costs on the other. A claim that is deliberated upon for years is likely to cost the Organization more in administrative costs and legal exposure than if it had been handled more expeditiously.

Sick leave, inability/partial ability to perform functions

78. The Office has worked with visitors on issues of sick leave, the inability or partial inability to perform the functions of the post for health reasons, and the implications of partial medical clearances. The systemic issue that emerged was the way in which the various elements fit together and how they are coordinated across the system. In and of themselves, the individual elements do not seem problematic, and at first glance they are covered by sick leave or a disability pension.

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[3] Interrelated issues involved compensation for service-incurred injury or illness; disability pension; insurance claims; and after-service-health insurance.

[4] Such an approach could link to developments with respect to return-to-work policies in the framework of an occupational safety and health policy. See the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the management of sick leave in the United Nations system (A/67/337/Add.1).

79. For example, a partial medical clearance, even if it may be the most appropriate medical finding, is difficult for the system to translate into an appropriate administrative action. A traumatic event occurring at a mission, for example, may, in the opinion of a medical expert, render a staff member unable to serve in the same location for reasons of mental health. However, there may be no impediment to discharging the staff member to perform similar functions at another location. When there is a suitable post available elsewhere and the staff member can properly compete in the selection process, there are no concerns. However, where placement would potentially violate the right of other staff to be considered for the post, there is a lacuna with respect to the status, rights and social security of the staff member with the partial medical clearance who, for health reasons, can no longer serve in the original assignment. In such situations, not only can the staff member no longer perform the original functions, but he/she cannot receive a disability pension either when the sick leave entitlements are exhausted, owing to the partial clearance for service.

80. Additionally, it is unclear what efforts the Organization should or could be reasonably requested to make to accommodate such situations.

81. In the context of the evolving discussion on sick leave management (see A/67/337), there is opportunity to review the impact of the work climate and conflict situations on absenteeism and sick leave-related stress.

Ongoing efforts and opportunities

82. The Office collaborated with stakeholders in respect of the linkage between medical opinions and resulting administrative consequences. Addressing the missing links provides a short-term opportunity to streamline processes and create efficiencies while also supporting affected staff members. A more long-term opportunity involves the development of a return-to-work policy that benefits both staff and the Organization.[5]

Accommodation for persons with disability

83. The Office handled cases where staff wanted to continue working, although the level of their ability to do so had changed. In the absence of organizational guidance on what constitutes reasonable accommodation, such cases were negotiated or mediated on a case-by-case basis.

Ongoing efforts and opportunities

84. The Office recognizes the efforts that are under way to issue a framework on accessibility for persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation. There is opportunity to provide related guidance to managers on the efforts the Organization can be reasonably expected to make to accommodate the needs of staff with disabilities. This could potentially show the inclusiveness of the Organization as an employer and ensure equal treatment for cases that are similar in nature.

[5] The recommendation to design and implement a return-to-work policy was contained in document A/337/Add.1. The recommendation was supported by the organizations of the United Nations system.

VI. Incentives for the informal resolution of conflict

A. Value of informal conflict resolution

85. In 2012, the utilization rate of the Office was 2.5 per cent of all staff: specifically, 3.2 per cent for the Secretariat, 1.3 per cent for the funds and programmes, and 1.6 per cent for UNHCR.[6]

86. The number of cases received for informal resolution is not indicative of the total exposure of the Organization to the impact and risks of conflict, which can be far-reaching even with a single incidence of unmanaged conflict; nor is it indicative of the pervasiveness of conflict within the Organization, which often remains hidden owing to several factors — including the fear of reprisal, a breakdown in communication, cultural factors and distrust — and may not be easily assessed.

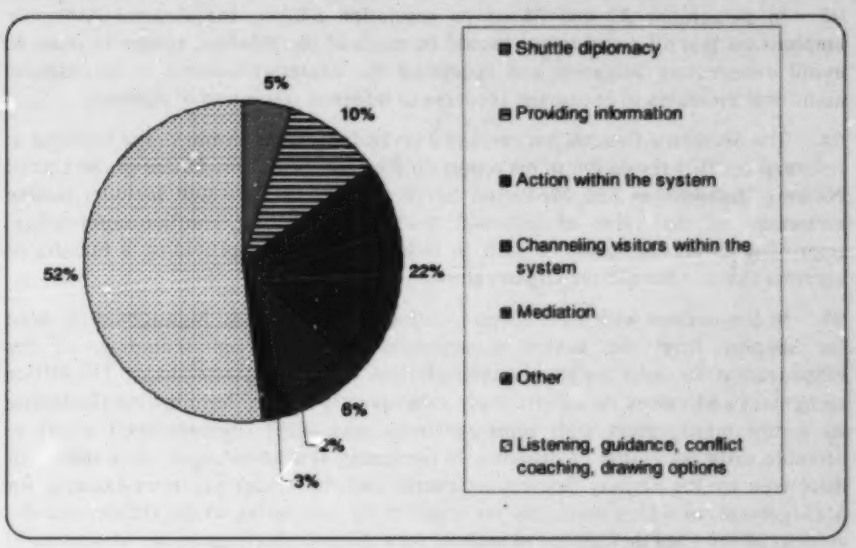
87. Hidden conflict can corrode the work environment and is linked to lowered morale and motivation, health issues, absenteeism, presenteeism, and damaged relations, and affects work output. In that regard, timely resolution has restorative returns. Through its outreach and canvassing efforts, the Office has promoted conflict competence aimed at empowering staff to effectively address concerns and has encouraged the Organization's workforce to come forward with wide-ranging concerns.

88. It is important to note that there may not be rules, regulations, established procedures or specific administrative actions for many concerns and dilemmas faced by staff, meaning that such instances could not be addressed in a formal forum. In general, and especially for such cases, the Office continues to provide a forum that can be accessed by staff for any kind of concern.

89. Listening, empathy, compassion, calibrating destructive emotions and fostering positive emotions, and encouraging dialogue and communication are only some of the many ways the Office adds value in the concerns it addresses — value that is difficult to quantify. Examples of client feedback serving as testimony to the value of those services, include the following: "I could never express how grateful I feel that institutions such as yours exist in our system"; "I am relieved that now we can close this chapter and I can focus on my new assignment without dealing with this legacy any longer"; "A small word of thanks for taking time to meet with me and to listen to my concerns. I appreciate your patience"; and "Your advice to have a discussion with the supervisor was very useful and successful". The services provided by the Office in 2012 are represented in figure VI.

[6] The estimates are based on information contained in document A/67/329. The total number of staff for the Secretariat, the funds and programmes and UNHCR is estimated at 74,154.

Figure VI
Services provided by the Office of the Ombudsman to visitors in 2012



90. Informal resolution is participatory in nature, allowing parties in conflict to have a voice, representation and a high degree of control over the processes and decisions affecting them. As such, solutions and agreements reached in informal resolution have substantial durability and often prevent the escalation of issues, including escalation to litigation. In informal dispute resolution, the establishment of precedents is avoided and opportunities for creative ways to resolve workplace issues are offered.

91. The Office notes that evaluating its contribution solely in quantitative terms and overemphasizing its role in reducing litigation are Organizational obstacles that could impede the progress of informal resolution. Initiatives to guide a shift towards a culture of dialogue could potentially focus on the other advantages of informal conflict resolution.

92. The informal dispute resolution channel is a key component of the Organization's accountability framework. In delivering its mandate, the Office plays a role in both institutional as well as individual accountability. As indicated by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on accountability frameworks in the United Nations system (A/66/710), access to independent formal and informal grievance procedures inside the Organization is, inter alia, essential to rigorous accountability, and is one of the benchmarks of an effective accountability system. Within the resources available to it, the Office provides improved in-person accessibility to all staff. Owing to resource considerations, remote channels (such as e-mail, telephone, videoconference and Skype) are often used by the Office. The Joint Inspection Unit notes in its report that it is preferable when in-person access is available to staff, owing to the confidential and personal nature of information in conflict situations (ibid., paras. 128-130 and 135).

B. Update on incentives to promote informal conflict resolution

93. In paragraphs 22 and 24 of its resolution 67/241, the General Assembly emphasized that all possible use should be made of the informal system in order to avoid unnecessary litigation and requested the Secretary-General to recommend additional measures to encourage recourse to informal resolution of disputes.

94. The Secretary-General has proposed several measures to encourage recourse to informal conflict resolution in his report on the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (A/65/303), which include: raising awareness of the value of informal resolution, building conflict competence, improving in-person access to staff in field locations and providing a breadth of services that can benefit the Organization.

95. In conjunction with the recommendations, the Office also highlighted the need for support from the senior management and staff representatives of the Organization, in order for its recommendations to take concrete shape. The Office recognizes and values the efforts made subsequently by the Organization (including its senior management staff representatives, and other organizational units) to promote early resolution of disputes. In particular, it acknowledges the issuance of directives by the Deputy Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Management, in which managers are urged to be responsive to the Office; and the support of the Chef de Cabinet to include the Office in meetings of the Management Committee and Management Performance Board. The Office reiterates the necessity of participating in collaborative efforts with the management and staff of the Organization as the quintessential means to promote a culture of dialogue and the amicable resolution of disputes.

96. The Office has made efforts in those areas on its own and in collaboration with partners and stakeholders within the Organization, as reported in the earlier reports on its activities (A/66/224 and A/67/172). As reflected in paragraphs 38 to 45 of the present report, the Office continued to raise awareness during the reporting period about the value of informal resolution and to develop conflict competence as a standard practice. It continued to provide feedback on systemic issues through engagement with stakeholders and to use in-person intervention strategically in order to provide the most effective and efficient means to prevent the escalation of conflict and mitigate the risks related thereto.

VII. The way forward

Conflict competence

97. The Office recognizes the efforts made by the Organization in developing conflict competence and continues to solicit such efforts in the way forward. In the coming years, the Office will continue to focus on the area of developing conflict competence.

Special political missions

98. As noted by the Secretary-General in his previous reports (A/67/172 and A/66/224), the Office recognizes the need for staff in special political missions to have enhanced in-person access to informal conflict resolution. The General

Assembly, in its resolution 66/237, stressed the importance of ensuring access for all staff members to the new system of administration of justice, regardless of their duty station. Observations made by ombudsmen during mission visits reflect a substantial need for greater in-person intervention in the field. The Office notes that the limited resources to cover staff in special political missions are an impediment to effective service delivery in the field.

Support for staff in hardship duty stations

99. The Office recognizes the need for staff and management to find mutually acceptable solutions to the ongoing issues of long-serving staff in hardship duty stations and stands ready to facilitate the process. The Office notes the challenges faced by staff in hardship locations and the negative impact of those challenges on the health and well-being, in particular mental health, of some staff who have served for prolonged periods of time.

Organizational change and reform

100. In the coming years, the Office will continue to support staff and managers in preparing for and managing reform and change, and the consequences thereof. Several new and ongoing initiatives, including Umoja, implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, and gender mainstreaming, will require adapting to a fast-changing environment. In that regard, the Office stands ready to support the staff and managers of the United Nations.

United Nations A/68/159

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 July 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 76 (a) of the preliminary list*
Oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its fourteenth meeting

Letter dated 17 July 2013 from the Co-Chairs of the Consultative Process addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/78 of 11 December 2012, we were appointed as the Co-Chairs of the fourteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

We have the honour to submit to you the attached report on the work of the Informal Consultative Process at its fourteenth meeting, which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 17 to 20 June 2013. The outcome of the meeting consists of our summary of issues and ideas raised during the meeting and in particular, with regard to the topic of focus: "The impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment".

In line with past practice, we kindly request that the present letter and the report of the Informal Consultative Process be circulated as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under item 76 (a) of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Milan Jaya **Meetarbhan**
Don **MacKay**
Co-Chairs

* A/68/50.

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Fourteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

(17-20 June 2013)

Co-Chairs' summary of discussions[1]

1. The United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the "Informal Consultative Process") held its fourteenth meeting from 17 to 20 June 2013 and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/78, focused its discussions on the topic entitled "The impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment".

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of 76 States, 13 intergovernmental organizations and other bodies and entities and 8 non-governmental organizations.[2]

3. The following supporting documentation was available to the meeting: (a) report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/68/71); and (b) format and annotated provisional agenda of the meeting (A/AC.259/L.14).

Agenda items 1 and 2
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

4. The two Co-Chairs, Don MacKay (New Zealand) and Milan Jaya Meetarbhan (Mauritius), appointed by the President of the General Assembly, opened the meeting.

5. Patricia O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, and Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, made opening remarks.

6. The meeting adopted the format and annotated provisional agenda and approved the proposed organization of work.

Agenda item 3
General exchange of views

7. A general exchange of views on the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, as reflected below (paras. 8-18), took place at the plenary meetings on 17 and 19 June. The discussions held on the topic of focus within the Panel's segments are reflected in paragraphs 19 to 62 below.

8. Delegations expressed continued support for the Informal Consultative Process and highlighted the timeliness and critical importance of the topic of focus. They also expressed appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea on the topic of focus of the fourteenth meeting (A/68/71).

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[1] The summary is intended for reference purposes only and not as a record of the discussions.

[2] A list of participants is available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm.

9. Delegations recalled that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("the Convention") provided the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas, including in relation to the protection and preservation of the marine environment and ocean acidification. The role of the Convention in providing for the sustainable management of the oceans and their resources was also stressed. The provisions of the Convention on marine scientific research and the transfer of marine technology were highlighted as important when considering ocean acidification. In the light of the fact that ocean acidification resulted from the uptake of increasing amounts of carbon dioxide (CO_2) by the oceans, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol were also relevant instruments in that regard. It was observed that the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the London Convention and its Protocol, were also pertinent. Delegations stressed that the discussions at the meeting should focus only on the technical and scientific aspects of ocean acidification, and that policy or regulatory aspects should not be included.

10. The critical role of the oceans in the global carbon cycle was recalled. It was noted that the absorption of CO_2 emissions by the oceans had resulted in increasing acidity or lower pH of the oceans at a rate not seen in 30 million years. Delegations recognized that, although ocean acidification and climate change were separate phenomena, increased levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere contributed to both. In that regard, it was observed that, as long as CO_2 levels continued to increase, so would the acidification of the oceans. Concern was expressed that the cumulative effects of climate change and ocean acidification might cause changes in the marine environment at a pace such that marine ecosystems and species would not have sufficient time to adapt.

11. Delegations highlighted the wide range of impacts of ocean acidification on the oceans and marine organisms. They recognized that ocean acidification was a global threat which directly affected important components of the ocean food web, such as primary producers (plankton), coral reefs, shellfish and crustaceans. In particular, impacts on the ability of key marine organisms to build shells and skeletal structures and to deal with physiological stress were highlighted, along with impacts on coral reef-building organisms and the resulting effects on net global coral reef coverage. Marine species that were important in capture fisheries and mariculture were also impacted, as was the transmission of sound in the oceans. These impacts could threaten protein supply and food security for millions of people, as well as the fishing industry. Social and cultural structures could also be negatively impacted. In that regard, delegations highlighted the fact that ocean acidification undermined the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

12. In addition to the risk of loss of territory for those islands which are composed of reefs, delegations stressed that such impacts revealed that ocean acidification not only constituted a challenge for sustainable development and the marine environment, but also a serious threat to the survival of many countries. Many delegations noted that the impacts of ocean acidification disproportionately affected developing countries, particularly small island developing States and developing coastal States.

13. Many delegations recalled that knowledge about the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment was still limited. Given the fact that research on ocean acidification was relatively new, delegations stressed the need for additional research on the impact of ocean acidification on marine ecosystems, including with a view to assessing their economic and social consequences, as well as assisting in the development of mitigation and adaptation policies. Many delegations called for the implementation of paragraph 166 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, entitled "The future we want", particularly with regard to the need to support marine scientific research and monitoring of ocean acidification, including through enhanced cooperation. Some delegations also highlighted the need for enhanced information and data-sharing. In particular, support was expressed by several delegations for a global ocean acidification observing network. The need for practical procedures to monitor ocean acidification was also highlighted.

14. Many delegations provided information on their research activities related to ocean acidification, including efforts to monitor, assess and address its impacts. The need to build capacity to strengthen and expand research programmes, including through transfer of technology and training fellowships, was emphasized. In this context, the establishment of the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was noted.

15. With regard to the mitigation of ocean acidification, delegations stressed that the principal mitigation measure was the reduction of CO_2 emissions. The potential of other mitigation methods, such as carbon capture and storage, was also noted by several delegations. At the same time, the need for caution and for additional research, including on the possible deleterious side effects of such methods, was highlighted. There was a call for a precautionary approach to be fully applied with regard to ocean fertilization and ocean geoengineering which, it was considered, could cause more devastating problems than they solved. The importance of maintaining and restoring carbon sinks, reducing energy demand and developing renewable sources of energy was also emphasized.

16. The importance of adaptation measures was emphasized. In this context, several delegations highlighted the need to also reduce the impacts of other stressors on the marine environment, including pollution, coastal erosion, destructive fishing practices and overfishing, in order to enhance the resiliency of marine ecosystems to ocean acidification. In that regard, the importance of tools, such as environmental impact assessments, marine protected areas and marine spatial planning, as well as the need for improved fisheries management, was noted. It was observed, however, that some fishing activities, in particular illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, could aggravate the impacts of ocean acidification by affecting ecosystem health, but that fisheries were also impacted by ocean acidification. Many delegations expressed the view that the establishment of marine protected areas could help to build the resilience of marine ecosystems, including by addressing a range of stressors and cumulative impacts. It was observed that the development of adaptive strategies presented a challenge for some States. In that regard, the need for enhanced capacity-building for ecosystem management was also noted.

17. Delegations highlighted the importance of international cooperation and coordination in dealing with ocean acidification and its impacts on the marine

environment, including through existing mechanisms such as the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects ("Regular Process"). The view was expressed that initiatives such as the International Ocean Carbon Coordination Project were also relevant in that regard. It was suggested that international cooperation and coordination should be a priority, in order to avoid competition among projects and achieve complementarities. The view was expressed that initiatives such as the Regular Process were an important aspect of international cooperation and that such processes must also take into account the needs and concerns of developing countries. The benefits of cooperation in providing the best available scientific information on the impacts of ocean acidification to policymakers were highlighted. A suggestion was made, in this regard, that expanded research and targeted management and policy responses needed to be undertaken in ways that were mutually supportive and responsive. It was also noted that scientific work should be conducted in formats that were appropriate for policymakers.

Area of focus: impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment

18. In accordance with the annotated agenda, discussions in the Panel segments were structured around: (a) the process of ocean acidification; (b) impacts of ocean acidification and ongoing activities at the global, regional and national levels to address those impacts; and (c) opportunities and challenges for addressing the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, including through enhanced cooperation on scientific and technical aspects. The segments were launched by presentations from panellists, followed by interactive discussions.

1. The process of ocean acidification: impacts of ocean acidification and ongoing activities at the global, regional and national levels to address those impacts

(a) Panel presentations

19. In segment 1, Richard Feely, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (United States of America), focused on the science of the ocean acidification process. He illustrated how acidification was already taking place, noting a measurable increase in acidity at very rapid rates, including an expected increase of 100 to 150 per cent by the year 2100, compared to pre-industrial conditions, if current CO_2 emissions were not reduced. He also highlighted the increased vulnerability of certain areas, due to the combination of multiple stressors, in particular the Arctic, Antarctic, tropical regions and coastal regions, where upwelling exacerbated ocean acidification.

20. Juying Wang, China National Marine Environmental Monitoring Centre, explained how the changing carbonate equilibrium of the oceans would impact calcifying organisms and noted that, although the ocean acidification process was a global problem, coastal areas were particularly vulnerable to its impacts. She presented case studies of coastal acidification and an overview of China's research activities in that field. She suggested that questions for discussions may include: how to start ocean acidification observation, especially in developing countries; how to set up a standardized methodology for ocean acidification observation and research, and time-series observing stations; the relationship between ocean acidification and coastal acidification; and the impacts of ocean acidification on aquaculture.

21. In segment 2, Carol Turley, Plymouth Marine Laboratory (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), focused on the projected alarming rate of changes to basic ocean chemistry over the next decades. She noted that those changes were already taking place, with negative impacts on the aquaculture industry and on natural populations, including key organisms within marine food webs. They would result in future losses of some of the keystone species from polar to tropical waters, altering pelagic and benthic ecosystems and the food webs they supported. Ms. Turley also noted the difficulty and uncertainty of predicting what complex ocean ecosystems and their food webs would look like in the future.

22. Yoshihisa Shirayama, Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology, presented the outcome of long-term experiments conducted in order to assess future impacts of ocean acidification on marine organisms. He also presented information on the predicted future distribution of corals and its relevance to the identification of ecologically or biologically sensitive areas and the establishment of marine protected areas.

23. Nathalie Jeanne-Marie Hilmi, Centre Scientifique de Monaco, presented the outcome and recommendations of two international interdisciplinary workshops on the economics of ocean acidification and on the impacts of ocean acidification on fisheries and aquaculture, respectively. She highlighted some conclusions, noting that knowledge of the impacts of ocean acidification, particularly on fisheries, was still insufficient and that there was a need for more research in that regard.

24. Carol Turley, on behalf of Cliff Law, New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, presented time-series data indicating ongoing and future acidification in the South-West Pacific region. Considerations related to the potential impacts of increased dissolved carbon dioxide and reduced carbonate saturation on marine ecosystems and the services they provide, including with regard to the impact of ocean acidification on pelagic surface water ecosystems and invertebrates and on cold-water coral were also highlighted.

25. Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish Farms, stated that the significant decline in oyster larvae production registered in a major shellfish hatchery on the west coast of the United States of America was an illustration of the consequences of changes in seawater chemistry as a result of ocean acidification. He described the efforts to address the regression in production through real-time monitoring and seawater treatment systems to manipulate seawater chemistry.

26. Yimnang Golbuu, Palau International Coral Reef Center, spoke about the importance of coral reefs for Palau and other coastal States. He drew attention to some coral reef areas in Palau which seemed more resilient to high temperature and high acidity conditions and noted the need for further studies to be undertaken to better understand the nature and resiliency of those special habitats. He stressed the importance of the establishment of a network of marine protected areas to safeguard those resilient sites.

27. Robert B. Dunbar, Stanford University, focused on the interconnectedness between the economic livelihood of many small island developing States and healthy coral reefs. He suggested pathways to address the impacts of ocean acidification by reducing the cumulative effects of multiple stressors.

(b) Panel discussions

28. The urgent need to reduce CO_2 emissions to effectively mitigate ocean acidification in the long term was stressed. A panellist noted that, although the depth in the oceans above which calcification could occur and below which carbonates readily dissolved, that is, the saturation horizon, was considered a tipping point for the impacts of ocean acidification, the effects would start to be felt before that threshold was reached. It was also noted that ocean acidity levels did not remain constant, but changed cyclically and seasonally. It was observed that some marine areas, such as polar areas and coastal areas, would experience greater levels of ocean acidification in the short term because of their particular characteristics.

29. Delegations expressed concern about the potential impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, as well as on the communities and industries that relied on it.

30. A panellist pointed out that there had been past instances of high levels of ocean acidification due to volcanic activity, which had led to mass species extinctions, but that they had occurred over a longer period of time. Notably, the speed and scale of the current change in acidity levels was unprecedented in the last 60 million, or possibly even 300 million, years.

31. Concern was also expressed about the impacts of ocean acidification on both warm and cold-water corals. A panellist noted that, while some species of coral exhibited resiliency to bleaching (caused by warming), additional research was needed to fully understand the origins of such resiliency. In that regard, the extent to which the increased resilience of certain types of corals was based on genetics was unknown. A panellist suggested that the relative resiliency of different strains of algae species symbiotically associated with certain types of coral might be a factor. Another panellist observed that understanding the origins of resiliency was particularly important for many small island developing States in the light, inter alia, of the role played by healthy coral in mitigating the effects of sea level rise. The comment was made that, despite hopes of resilience by some coral species, the overwhelming scientific evidence was that the area of the ocean that was able to support healthy corals (both tropical and cold-water) would be dramatically reduced in forthcoming decades.

32. Concern was expressed about the possible effect of ocean acidification on sound absorption in the oceans and its impact on marine mammals. In that regard, a panellist pointed out that sound velocity was affected and could interfere with the ability of some species to locate, for example, food and mating partners. Another panellist added that transmission of lower frequencies would be more affected, suggesting possible impacts on large marine mammals, such as whales and other cetaceans.

33. With regard to the socioeconomic impacts of ocean acidification on communities reliant on coral reefs, panellists noted that these ecosystems played an important role in the fishing sector, the aquaculture industry and the tourism and leisure sectors in terms of economic revenue and livelihoods. They also played a key role in protecting coastlines and had, in particular, significant social and cultural value for island communities. The view was expressed, however, that, conversely, tourism might also contribute to CO_2 emissions, thereby exacerbating ocean acidification.

34. The particular sensitivity of small island developing States to the impacts of ocean acidification was underscored. It was noted that many small island developing States relied on coral reefs for their economic, social and cultural well-being and that one third of those States were made up of coral reefs.

35. In the light of the importance of the environmental, social and economic impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, the suggestion was made that ocean acidification be included in an oceans sustainable development goal.

36. Consideration was given to measures to improve the ability of the marine environment to withstand the adverse effects of ocean acidification. In that regard, the view was expressed that the only effective long-term mitigation measure at the global level would be to reduce CO_2 emissions. A panellist noted that, given the slow pace of circulation of water between the upper level of the ocean, where CO_2 was absorbed, and the bottom of the ocean, where CO_2 could be buffered and the effects of ocean acidification neutralized, increases in CO_2 in the atmosphere substantially lengthened recovery time. However, a significant reduction in carbon emissions could minimize the impacts of ocean acidification and shorten the recovery time to hundreds of years from tens or hundreds of thousands of years. Another panellist anticipated that, under the strong regulation scenarios considered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, some coral species in Asia could survive the projected levels of ocean acidification.

37. Some panellists emphasized that efforts should be made to reduce the impacts of other stressors on vulnerable marine ecosystems and to build the resilience of threatened organisms and communities. The management of cumulative stressors at the local level and the sharing of information and know-how among stakeholders were recognized as valid ways to address the adverse impacts of ocean acidification. Some panellists also highlighted the possibility of increasing reliance on species more resilient to ocean acidification.

38. A panellist noted that the scope of protection required in marine protected areas to effectively address the impacts of ocean acidification could vary, depending on the circumstances. However, the aim should be to reduce the impacts of stressors, such as fishing, tourism, pollution and other activities with negative impacts. Panellists also observed that the establishment of marine protected areas would have to take into account the expected future impacts of ocean acidification on various areas or particular ecosystems. In that regard, it was noted that, for example, seamount areas would be more likely to remain above the rising saturation horizon and could therefore be less affected by ocean acidification.

39. A panellist suggested that, with access to timely scientific information, aquaculture industries could put in place more effective adaptation measures. The approach of oyster farms in the north-west of the United States of America in adapting to increased ocean acidification through monitoring and adaptive management was highlighted as an example for other similarly placed industries in other countries. However, a panellist noted that the success of that approach depended on the ability to effectively monitor and control water conditions in a contained environment and might no longer be effective as the oceans became more acidic.

40. It was observed that, given the global nature of the problem, coordinated action at the global, regional, national and local levels was needed to minimize the impacts of ocean acidification.

41. With regard to research needs, a panellist noted that, although research had increased in recent years, considerable knowledge gaps still remained and there was a particular need for long-term studies. Information was provided on the availability of a database of naturally acidic marine areas.

42. Consideration was given to how research could be prioritized. In that regard, a panellist noted that each State might have different priorities, depending on their particular situation. For instance, for some States, key areas for future research could include the impacts of ocean acidification on cold-water areas, the possible accelerating effects of retreating polar ice on ocean acidification, and how marine ecosystems and communities were affected over time. The adverse effect of ocean acidification on aquaculture should also be studied in terms of ensuring food security as global population increased.

43. In response to a question raised regarding the certainty of the available scientific information on ocean acidification, some panellists stressed that there was consensus among scientists with regard to some aspects, such as the fact that ocean chemistry would be changed by the increase of CO_2 in the atmosphere. However, there was less certainty with regard to the impacts of ocean acidification on coastal and deep sea areas, as illustrated by the discrepancies between observations and models due to the complexities of, and variations within, those areas. It was pointed out that important information could be derived from historical precedents and CO_2 vent areas where volcanic processes caused CO_2 to vent from submarine sediments, thus creating a natural low-pH environment. The fifth assessment report of the International Panel on Climate Change was expected to include additional information in regard to the level of certainty in existing scientific research.

44. A panellist also observed that little was known about how ocean acidification would affect the migratory patterns of highly migratory fish stocks, particularly since the ability to track such migrations over time was a recent development. However, given the fact that migratory patterns were likely to be based on conditions in the marine environment, they might be affected. Another panellist noted that initial estimates regarding the movement of fish stocks to colder waters in response to the warming of the oceans might be reconsidered in the light of the higher rate of ocean acidification in colder waters.

45. Uncertainty still existed also with regard to the impacts of ocean acidification on some species. For instance, it was not known whether species in highly variable acidity levels would be more resistant to decreases in pH or were approaching a tipping point. It was noted that adult fish were believed to be less sensitive to changes in pH than larvae and juvenile fish.

46. Some delegations highlighted the importance of capacity-building in the light of the technical and specialized nature and cost of the research required to observe and monitor ocean acidification and its impacts. A panellist observed that building the capacity of States around the world, including developing countries, to measure and monitor ocean acidification would help to develop an understanding of what was occurring at both the global and local levels, and allow policymakers to have an early warning of potential impacts on marine ecosystems. In that regard, reference was made to efforts to develop a global ocean acidification observing network. Another panellist stressed the need to encourage partnerships between developed and developing countries to address that issue. The transfer of existing knowledge to developing countries was also considered important.

2. Opportunities and challenges for addressing the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment, including through enhanced cooperation on scientific and technical aspects

(a) Panel presentations

47. Lisa Suatoni, Natural Resources Defense Council, provided an overview of actions at the local and ecosystem levels to reduce the impacts of ocean acidification. She emphasized that, even if the effects of ocean acidification on a species or an ecosystem could not be directly studied, reducing other stressors, including nitrogen pollution from run-off, sedimentation from dredging, and harvest pressures, would help to alleviate the effects of ocean acidification on individual organisms. She concluded her presentation by noting that many adaptation strategies required increased investments in scientific capacity and also highlighted the benefits of establishing marine protected areas.

48. Michel Warnau, International Atomic Energy Agency, informed the meeting about the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre of the IAEA Environmental Laboratories. He noted that the mandate of the Centre was to facilitate, promote and disseminate information about global activities on ocean acidification, with a view to providing a platform for an international observation network, experimentation in ocean acidification, capacity-building and the dissemination of ocean acidification data. He highlighted the effective and global cooperation of the project with other major national and international projects involved in ocean acidification research.

49. Libby Jewett, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, informed the meeting about the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network, a project developed in close liaison with the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre, and funded to date by national sources and through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and associated bodies (Global Ocean Observing System and the International Ocean Carbon Coordination Project). She noted that the Network aimed at monitoring and observing how ocean chemistry was changing; identifying impacts on species and ecosystems; developing models to assess future impacts on ecosystems and human communities; and developing adaptation strategies. Ms. Jewett highlighted the need for additional observation sites in south-western Africa, north-western Africa, the Indian Ocean and the coral triangle and noted that near-shore areas would need a higher spatial and temporal coverage of observations than open ocean areas.

50. Ilana Wainer, Departamento de Oceanografia Física, Instituto Oceanográfico, Universidade de São Paulo, provided an overview of the science behind ocean acidification. She presented actions undertaken in Brazil to increase the resilience of healthy marine ecosystems, develop and strengthen human resources, enhance coastal monitoring activities, and improve coordination and capacity to conduct research. She observed that the specific needs of developing countries included: developing and strengthening human resources; procuring quantitative information and tools for political and economic decision makers; improving coordination and partnerships; and raising public awareness.

51. Germain Michel Ranjoanina, Madagascar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, considered measures to address ocean acidification from the African perspective.

He noted the challenges faced by African countries and stressed the need for awareness-raising, the establishment of monitoring and control stations in coastal waters, and the need to promote national capacity and institutional capacity-building.

(b) Panel discussions

52. Consideration was given to ways in which ocean acidification could be addressed, taking into account existing limitations in national capacity and the weakness in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the transfer of marine technology. In that regard, some delegations expressed interest in technology transfer and capacity-building opportunities, which could be offered through the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre. It was indicated that both the Centre and the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network encouraged the active participation of all States and entities. In particular, States in those areas which were considered to be the most vulnerable to ocean acidification were invited to avail themselves of the capacity-building programmes of both entities.

53. It was also observed that the lack of capacity for dealing with ocean acidification could be overcome by reducing other stressors, with a view to improving ecosystem health and resilience to ocean acidification.

54. Given the fact that States might be developing different adaptation measures to deal with ocean acidification, the usefulness, particularly for developing countries, of establishing universally applicable guidelines was highlighted. Clarification was sought on the role of marine protected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction with regard to assessment or mitigation of the impacts of ocean acidification. In that regard, some panellists observed that, similar to areas within national jurisdiction, such tools would allow a holistic approach to protecting marine ecosystems from existing and future threats by, inter alia, eliminating or reducing local stressors to improve ecosystem health and building resilience to ocean acidification.

55. A question was raised on ways in which the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre intended to expand its membership, and on how to join or support the initiative. A panellist explained that the initiative creating the Centre had come from member States of IAEA and that participation in the Centre was open to all States. The Centre could be supported through direct or in-kind contributions to the IAEA Peaceful Use Initiative. Data-sharing with the Centre was also encouraged.

56. It was clarified that, while the Centre did not focus specifically on fisheries, the Second International Workshop on Economics of Ocean Acidification, co-organized in November 2012 by IAEA and the Centre Scientifique de Monaco, with the participation of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, had focused on the impacts of ocean acidification on fisheries and aquaculture and the economic consequences.

57. In relation to participation in the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network, a panellist noted that awareness about the Network was being raised, including through capacity-building workshops. Some panellists emphasized the need for close coordination with other initiatives in order to avoid duplication. In that regard, the existing strong cooperation between the Network and other observation systems, including the Global Ocean Observing System, the International Ocean Carbon Coordination Project and the Group on Earth

Observations, was highlighted. It was noted that representatives of the first two observation systems had attended the first meeting on the Network.

58. Some delegations suggested that the Centre and the Network take into account, and contribute to, the work within the framework of the Regular Process, since it better encompassed the efforts of States and international organizations, and would ensure that the General Assembly could play a role in addressing ocean acidification. The view was also expressed that this would help to give more visibility to, and support for, those initiatives. The view was expressed that possible gaps and overlapping in the work of intergovernmental organizations in relation to novel or topical law of the sea issues gave rise to some concern. In that regard, the balanced manner in which the General Assembly was coordinating efforts between Governments and specialized agencies was highlighted.

59. Some delegations highlighted the need to strengthen cooperation between institutions and agencies that were studying ocean acidification and among Governments. Consideration was given to the key impediments to international cooperation, and how they could be overcome. In particular, some panellists observed that broad international cooperation networks existed, but that the greatest challenge was building scientific capacity in geographic areas which were likely to be the most vulnerable to ocean acidification. Another panellist noted that limited access to information was an impediment for collaboration within and between countries.

60. The consensus among scientists on the seriousness of ocean acidification to the sustainability of marine ecosystems, such as coral reefs, and the concerted efforts and progress in coordinating scientific initiatives in that regard, both among and within countries, were also highlighted. The view was expressed that, from a political standpoint, the issue of ocean acidification had not been sufficiently brought to the attention of decision makers, and that this presented a major challenge to international cooperation.

61. A panellist observed that international cooperation was important for dat. collection and dissemination. Several databases had been developed and there was a need to consolidate the available information. The need to make data publicly available was also emphasized, as was the need for a more integrated approach to marine scientific research. Reference was also made to the importance of ensuring standardized data and identification of used methodologies for the purpose of data management and interpretation.

62. Another panellist referred to some areas of the South Atlantic. She noted that, while a monitoring network was at an early planning stage, with funding proposals still being addressed, establishing linkages with other networks was crucial. In that regard, in Brazil, connections with other scientists around the world were being sought through the development of a Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research working group.

Agenda item 4
Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

63. Andrew Hudson, UN-Oceans Coordinator, reported on the activities of UN-Oceans and updated the meeting on follow-up actions to General Assembly resolutions 66/231 and 67/78. He said that, in accordance with paragraph 239 of

resolution 66/231, UN-Oceans had prepared new draft terms of reference for consideration by the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. Mr. Hudson recalled the request contained in paragraph 267 of resolution 67/78 for UN-Oceans to prepare revised draft terms of reference for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. He noted in that context that UN-Oceans had received a number of constructive comments from Member States, and that two constructive discussion sessions with Member States had been held in 2013 to share views on a number of aspects, including the UN-Oceans mandate, structure and modalities of work. The meeting was also updated on the tenth meeting of UN-Oceans during the closing days of the Yeosu Expo 2012 in the Republic of Korea.

64. The Coordinator was thanked on behalf of a group of delegations, for the update on the work of UN-Oceans. The importance of UN-Oceans remaining focused on facilitating United Nations system-wide coherence and the implementation of the existing mandates of United Nations entities, relevant General Assembly resolutions and conference outcome documents was emphasized. Many delegations welcomed the work done in strengthening the central role, within UN-Oceans, of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs. Delegations recalled the importance of open consultations with Member States and transparency in the work of UN-Oceans and the review of its terms of reference, in keeping with the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 67/78. Delegations expressed their commitment to continue to work constructively in order to make progress on the terms of reference. Delegations looked forward to the consideration of the revised terms of reference during the informal consultations on the General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea in the latter part of the year.

65. Mr. Hudson reiterated the commitment of UN-Oceans to continuing its dialogue with Member States towards completing the draft terms of reference for formal presentation to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

66. Many delegations generally shared the Secretary-General's commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources. However, they also expressed concerns regarding the initiative entitled "The Oceans Compact: Healthy Oceans for Prosperity An Initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General" and the manner in which it was progressing, including with regard to the development of an action plan. They considered that the initiative of the Secretary-General sought to deal with issues relating to oceans and seas, but did not properly reflect the interests of Member States and the very delicate balance of rights, obligations and interests which should be taken into account. These delegations had reiterated their specific concerns about the Oceans Compact in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 14 March 2013. They recalled the request made in General Assembly resolution 67/78 for the Secretary-General to undertake open and regular consultations with Member States on all aspects of the initiative. The view was expressed that that request had not yet been fulfilled. Concern was also expressed regarding the establishment of an advisory group, as well as its functions, composition and the selection criteria for its members. Many delegations reiterated that they were not in a position to support the initiative as it currently stood, but remained ready to work in a truly consultative manner to address those concerns.

Agenda item 5
Process for the selection of topics and panellists, so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly

67. The Co-Chairs introduced item 5, noting that it reflected paragraph 255 of General Assembly resolution 67/78. Delegations were invited to provide their views and make proposals on ways to devise a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panellists, so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly during the informal consultations concerning the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea. No delegation requested the floor under this agenda item.

Agenda item 6
Issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea

68. The Co-Chairs drew attention to the composite streamlined list that they had prepared of issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea.[3]

69. A proposal was made for the fifteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process to focus on potential and new uses of the oceans. It was suggested that the topic would allow delegations to be updated on the current and new sustainable uses of the oceans and that Member States, in particular small island developing States, would gain relevant knowledge. It was noted that the discussion on this topic could feed into the discussions at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014.

[3] Available at: www.un.org/depts/los/consultative_process/ICP14_Presentations/Composite_List_of_Issues_2013.pdf.